THINGS SEEN IN CHINA

J. R. CHITTY

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THINGS SEEN IN CHINA

BY

J. R. CHITTY

WITH FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

IN writing this little book about a country with which, over and above the period of my personal residence, I have had life-long intimate connection, I have avoided touching on controversial and political matters of the present moment. And I have done this deliberately, because there is so vast a range of subjects of enduring interest that will remain worthy of consideration when the engrossing problems of to-day have found their solution. Should, however, the result be that I have paid but inadequate tribute to the many great qualities and the outstanding mental capacity of the most remarkable of Oriental peoples, I shall much regret it, if

only out of gratitude towards the Chinese friends, to whom I am indebted for many explanations appearing in these pages concerning the common things of life in China.

I should like also to acknowledge my obligation to Mr. Dyer Ball's admirable works, to which I have occasionally referred as the best source of ready verification known to me.

J. R. C.

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CHILDREN AT PLAY (KITES AND CRACKERS).

Things Seen in China

CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

IF one analyzes the body of impressions which go to make up a first conception of China and its people, the central point would, in many cases, prove to be the sense of contrariness. China is choked—to the Western mind—with the most ludicrous incongruities, and until these have been met, assimilated, and, so to speak, put behind one, it is next to impossible to arrive at any clear picture of a country full of beauty and interest for every intelligent

observer, or at an approximately true appreciation of the many splendid qualities of a people whom the Western world still ventures to patronize. Take, for example, the question of time. White races reckon their years from the Christian era forwards and backwards; and even if that date had not been adopted, it is quite certain that they would have established a single standard for the sake of convenience and historical research. Not so in China. Each Emperor's reign forms a standard of time, events being reckoned as occurring in such a year of such an Emperor. By way of complication, the Sovereign is not called by his own name, but by a "time style" adopted for this purpose, which, moreover, he may change as frequently as pleases him. Thus, for instance, on the Chinese principle, our present year of grace might be reckoned thus:

Edward VII. Time-style, say, Caspar. The year 1908 would then be, prior to accession day, the seventh year Caspar, afterwards "the eighth year Caspar"; or, if meanwhile he adopted another "time-style," it would be, up till January 22, the seventh year Caspar, and afterwards the eighth year something else. The present Emperor has retained one "time-style," that of Kwang Hsü (meaning, literally, "magnificent succession"), throughout his reign, for which, no doubt, the future historian will be grateful.

Then, again, the Chinese year being lunar, an extra month has to be provided about once in three years, which addition is placed in no fixed position relative to the ordinary months, but anywhere that fits in with an astrological conception of luck.

As for lesser questions of time, only commercial men attach a definite meaning to time phrases; to-morrow, for instance, may

mean any day in the moderately near future, an arrangement which "griffins" (white new-comers) are apt to find disconcerting.

Periods of hours, or less, are expressed by quaint comparisons, such as "the time it takes to shave your head," "to drink a cup of hot tea," "to burn a joss-stick." Of these phrases there are, perhaps, twenty or more in common use.

It is likely enough that that great resource of Chinese diplomacy, procrastination, is an unconscious exhibition of this characteristic uncertainty as to lapse of time, peculiar to the race in every relation.

The word "race," by the way, is quite a misnomer, for Manchu, Mongol, and China-man proper are very different folk. Even in appearance no one could confuse the small, supple, true Chinese of the southern provinces with the fine, powerful northerner. The personalities, too, are as distinct as

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A WEALTHY MANCHU AND HIS WIFE.

They are both dressed up for some festive occasion.

those of typical French and English. One of the curious contradictions in this connection is the devotion of the South Chinese to the queue, originally imposed by the Manchu as a sign of conquest. Kwantung natives, whose most contemptuous epithet for the foreigner is "the unshaven one," overlook the fact that the turban, often worn in that part of China, though never by Manchu or Mongol, was originally introduced to conceal the badge of servitude, the pigtail.

The whole anomalous and perplexing system of dual government is attributable largely to this duality of race. The Tartar central authority at Peking does business with the outer world, yet is in no way actually qualified to speak for China. It is, however, largely dependent on the provincial contributions for financial support, in return for which local governors are left

free to rule very much as they please. If a little digression into contemporary politics be permitted, a comparatively recent incident will serve to throw light on the "system" in action.

Some years ago an outbreak of piracy on the West River occasioned peremptory language on the part of Western diplomats at Peking. The Government of Kwantung was accordingly ordered to put down the trouble and compensate the victims of disorder, to which end a considerable sum of money was contributed by the Imperial treasury.

The Viceroy levied heavy taxes, and therewith paid off the foreigners; then bribed the pirates to return to more peaceful avocations, after executing a random half-dozen to "save face." Next he gathered a small company of ragged soldiers, and marched them, at trifling cost, along the

banks of the river; which things done, he pocketed the rest of the money, and everybody was satisfied.

When the pirates' depredations again involved diplomacy, the British Government insisted on the dispatch of Chinese gunboats to the West River, where they were placed under Customs control. This meant nothing in the Viceroy's purse, and he accordingly stirred up a riot and tremendous antiforeign agitation. The whole thing is typically Chinese, and indicates how very differently one has to go to work in China to attain a given object from any procedure that would be adopted with other peoples.

While speaking of officials, it may be interesting to remark that, though often denied, there exists an order of hereditary peers, who, however, do not, as such, take part in the government of the country

unless closely related to the Imperial House. In other cases, when a man is ennobled for his services or raised a step in the peerage, the honour, following Chinese contrariness, "descends" from him to his dead ancestors for as many generations as the imperial pleasure dictates. The principle is really extremely logical: "Of a great man's sons it cannot be known whether they will be worthy or no; of his forefathers, who have borne so valuable a citizen, we can truly recognize the merit." The officials, or mandarins, are of nine classes, distinguished by the buttons (*manting*) on their hats, and the embroideries on the breasts of their robes of state. In the first instance, they are drawn from the successful candidates at the final literary examination, open to the meanest peasant boy if he have the necessary brains, memory, and perseverance to

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A NAVAL MANDARIN, HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER.

This genial official lives at Kinkow : he is the commander of a fleet of gunboats on the Yangste-Kiang River. The daughter is about sixteen years old.

reach the standard of learning required. It is the ambition of every little village to obtain, through one of its children, representation in the mandarinate, and the headmen will be at pains to push any promising little lad up the educational ladder. It is a long business, for there are three *literati* examinations to get through before a man is qualified to become a mandarin; but even to pass the lowest of these affords the aspirant's family and village satisfaction, inasmuch as the more limited success entitles the scholar to "see" the ordinary lower-grade mandarin at any time—a valuable concession if it be a case of bribing the magistrate in some matter of family or village litigation.

A "first-class" mandarin is nearly always related to the Emperor, but the rank includes, also, the highest officials of the empire and one foreigner — Sir Robert

Hart. The button is coral, and the embroideries represent cocks.

The second-class button is sapphire blue, and the embroidery a peacock.

The third class, the high *literati*, has a purple button and pelican embroidery.

The fourth class is mainly of distinguished military officers, the soldier not being accounted a very admirable person.

So much was this the case thirty-five years ago, that it was then considered to disgrace a family if one member entered the army. The conception is slowly dying in face of the iron events of recent history.

The button of this class is light blue, the embroidery a pheasant.

Ordinary magistrates are drawn from one of the lower ranks of the mandarinate, and the theory of justice is admirable. A gong hangs in every magistrate's *yamen*, to suggest that, at any hour of day or night,

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CAPITAL PUNISHMENT OF A RIVER PIRATE.

The victim is placed on six thin flat stones within the cage, of which the upper planks fit closely round the neck. Each day one stone is removed, and the added pressure thus brought to bear upon the throat results sooner or later in strangulation ; but friends usually contrive to get poison to the victim in the early stages of this barbarous torture.

an aggrieved person may obtain redress. In fact, however, a civil suitor is often put off (unless entitled to "see"), and can rarely obtain an effectual hearing without much expenditure, both on the judge and on the court underlings.

Criminal procedure is usually more rapid, but it also is, most frequently, a matter of money, which facilitates the paying off of private grudges. A rich suitor will trump up a charge against his enemy, and, having bribed the judge, will obtain a verdict and sentence of flogging against the accused. He will then bribe the court lictor to be allowed to administer the punishment himself. Now, 100 strokes of the bamboo may mean nothing more severe than an English birching, but, differently applied, can be made exquisite torture.

A common thief is usually condemned to the *cangue* (a wooden collar) encased in

which the victim can neither lie down nor feed himself, and if the public be not charitable in the matter of placing food and drink in his mouth, may, and sometimes does, die of starvation. In such case the sufferer will drag himself to the door of his persecutor, and contrive to die there, if possible, in order to ensure a means of perpetually haunting and harassing, in the disembodied state, the enemy who proved too much for him in this life.

The problem of China, which is perhaps least realized elsewhere, is the existence of what has, not inaptly, been called Babel. Seven different languages, including *kuanhua*, or mandarin, but not counting subdivisions of dialect, are spoken in China, each as distinct from another as English and German. Natives of one province can but rarely converse with their neighbours over the border, which tends to preserve

each provincial Government as an *imperium in imperio.*

Naturally, the provincial authorities are not anxious to destroy a weapon so powerful for their aggrandizement. The existing divisions between one district and another would speedily disappear with a common tongue and a common standard of money, and such disappearance would make for the welding together of the empire under one central authority, capable of controlling all subordinate officers, who at the present time are so many petty kings. To-day the lower classes of different provinces can often only talk with one another in "pidgin," the bastard means of communication between natives and foreigners. The Court itself is not really enthusiastic about the provision of mandarin (*kuanhua*) as a common tongue, fearing lest a people thus united should rise against the Manchu

dynasty. The language question, however, by no means ends with the settlement of a vernacular. There are three written languages, all of them different from the seven spoken tongues and from each other.

It follows that for a stranger to attempt to learn a few native words is hardly a task that will repay the time spent, for as he passes from the Yangtze to the Hoang-ho, he will find that what he acquired with much labour in one part avails him nothing elsewhere. *Kiang*, the name for river in the south, becomes *ho* in the north, and so with most other common terms.

Owing to the absence of railways, till very recent years, the rivers and canals of China have played a great part, not only in her history, but in the creation of special populations, wonderfully distinct from all land-folk, though themselves providing

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JUNKS ON THE PEI-HO RIVER.

communities more alike than those of any two provinces. Thus, familiarity with the river population of the Yangtze gives ready insight into that which will be found on the Hoang-ho, Pei-ho, or Canton River, and this notwithstanding that the inhabitants of the nearest villages will in each case vary widely.

The junk and sampan dwellers might almost be said to form a race in themselves, for they dwell entirely on their inconvenient little craft, and marry solely within their own ranks. Many of the women never from birth to death sleep off the river, passing from the paternal junk to the marital sampan—there rearing a family, and in old age, when the children of the eldest son are growing up around them, slipping peacefully into the last sleep, and so landed for the first time to be carried to the grave.

The typical "large" native passenger-

boat on the Yangtze is from 25 to 30 feet long, and 6 to 8 feet wide. Out of this space a cabin is provided for the passengers. Aft of this erection the crew cook, work, and sleep, and the steering and rowing gear are stowed. There is a space in the bows where a sail may be hoisted, and where some of the crew betake themselves for poling the boat. Sleeping accommodation is provided in a hole under the deck, in which the men lie partly curled up—there is no space to stretch full length—one against the other; the captain occupies a like aperture, about the size of a dog-kennel, at the other end of the ship. And this is a palace for river population!*

The ordinary fishing sampan runs to about 15 feet in length, and perhaps 4 feet in

* Some of the details of these paragraphs are obtained from a remarkably fine article on river-folk published in the *North China Herald*.

width. By day menfolk toil—fish are very plentiful—and at night the little boat takes to a constant anchorage. A mat shed in the middle of the sampan provides the home, and there is sometimes another shelter in the stern, whence the boat is steered and propelled; while the bows are kept for the nets. In this tiny space the whole domestic life is carried on—birth, sickness, death, all take place under the narrow mat shed, generally open from morn till eve to the public eye—the river family has no taste for privacy! Curiously enough, unlike most water populations, many of those born and bred on the junks never learn to swim. Hundreds of the lives lost in the great typhoon at Hong Kong in the nineties could have been saved had the people been able to keep themselves afloat long enough to lay hold on some of the abundant wreckage. As it was, they were drowned within

sight of rescuers, only a few yards from shore.

The junk population on the rivers, lakes, and harbours are a cheery, merry people, usually most devoted in their family relations, even the girl babies being welcomed and cherished in nine cases out of ten. On the Yangtze inland reaches, too, up towards Tchang, they have all the fine characteristics which attach to men who live in constant peril and spend their lives in perpetual struggle with Nature. For the Yangtze gorges of the river, which in parts is so wide that more than one bank cannot be seen at a time (sometimes not even one), here compress it into narrows of three or four hundred yards, its waters whirling between high cliffs, and torn by great jagged boulders and detached rocks flung pell-mell across the roaring surface. To touch one of these means instant destruction to any craft—a

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WITHIN THE FORBIDDEN CITY.

Showing Harmony Gate.

destruction from which no soul aboard has ever escaped. Yet, as the "rapids boat" whirls forwards into a gorge, it looks as though to pass between the threatening upreared needles were impossible, so closely do the cruel heads stand up from the foaming waters.

The look-out man in the bows, comely and magnificent specimen of the race, stands with his long pole always poised, that at any instant he may stave the frail craft from sweeping a foot too far to left or right; while others look to the great oar, that runs the length of the boat, and can be used as a tremendous lever when, in moments of extreme peril, the current seems rushing the boat on some outstanding rock, around which the rapids suck fiercely at all that passes.

The scene is an indescribable one, heightened immeasurably by the roar of the waters

pent between those beetling banks, and the hissing of the foam against the cruel mid-stream boulders.

Experience is the only teacher of all that is conveyed in shooting rapids and weathering gorges, but at least a word of honourable mention is due to the iron nerve of the river crew. It is just the sort of cool, tense courage that one looks for in the British tar, and rarely finds anywhere else.

Speaking of the gorges, by the way, boat-building experts are very enthusiastic over the skill displayed in the construction of this special Yangtze craft. The planks are supple, and fastened together in such fashion that they yield like springs as the boat meets the rush of seething waters; and it is this yielding capacity alone which allows of the craft being suddenly hurried at a sharp angle to avoid some obstruction in the course. Constructed in the ordinary way,

Photo. Halftones Limited.

A WILLOW-BORDERED CANAL.

This is the Grand Canal and West Gate of Peking.

any such movement would overset the boat altogether.

The Grand Canal, constructed by Kublai Khan, has a very considerable "river" population along its 700 miles of track, but they are a less virile race than the junkmen of more dangerous waters. Not that the canal is entirely artificial. Quite otherwise: it includes many lakes and small rivers artificially linked to make a single waterway. The canal connects in the north with "China's Sorrow," the Yellow River, or Hoang-ho—that mighty stream of the northern provinces, of which the inundations are so extraordinarily rapid that a ford comfortably crossed at midday may by evening be a wide expanse of inland sea running at great speed, and entirely impassable even by ordinary boat or raft, owing to the violence of the current. Scores of lives are lost in this river every year, and sometimes hun-

dreds perish in a few days. Life is accounted so cheap in China that the incident, when it occurs, attracts little notice.

The whole of the Hoang-ho basin is covered with yellow earthy sediment—a feature so distinctively local and characteristic as to have decided an ancient imperial dynasty to select yellow as the Emperor's colour. Water and soil alike are tinged with the same bilious colour, the formation itself being called *loess*. It is supposed to be the dust of northern deserts swept by wind and water southwards, and piled up now to a depth of many hundred feet; but whether this explanation be truly scientific or no is a matter of opinion.

The Great Wall crosses the Hoang-ho course. It runs, roughly speaking, parallel with the caravan road from Tartary for a great part of its 2,000 miles length, but, truth to say, is a rather disappointing vision

in the plains and flat lands, where not unfrequently it looks more like a heap of stones and mud than the splendid masonry of common tradition. But the section nearest Peking, nearly 20 feet wide, and in sound repair, and, still more, the amazing stretch of stone fortification curling over the precipitous crests of the mountains further north, send a thrill of romance through the most prosaic Briton, a quickening of the imagination akin to that inspired by the Sphinx and Pyramids, by the wonderful ruins of Rhodesia, or the decaying glories of Rome and Greece. But for the Chinaman the Great Wall seems to have no kindling fire. He regards it with placid indifference, to be venerated, indeed, as ancient, but more especially as a handsome proof that "those gone"—superstition forbids a more accurate description—"allee plentee money 'spose he pay man."

First Impressions

Probably in the case of Kublai Khan there was a good deal of the "'spose," taken in the literal European rather than the pidgin-English sense. The labour employed was almost certainly slave, and therefore unpaid. Such little trifles as the materials and cartage for 2,000 miles of solid masonry 10 feet high, and at least the same in average width, would not, perhaps, trouble the Mongol conqueror.

Photo. Hall Sawyers Limited.

THE GREAT WALL.

Near the head of Nangkow Pass, looking north-east.

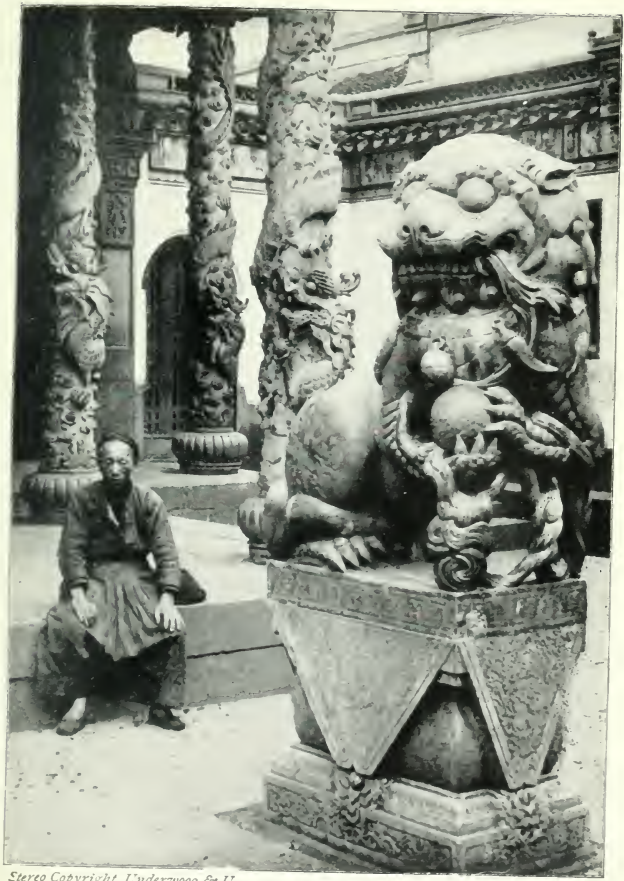
CHAPTER II

FAMILY LIFE

THE home of a wealthy Manchu or a high-class mandarin, though, of course, different from like establishments in Western lands, is a world of no less beauty and magnificence. Priceless embroideries, exquisite bronzes, delicate ivory work, afford the eye a perpetual feast, and with these elegant surroundings the gorgeous robes of both men and women accord suitably.

Carpets are unusual, but rugs may often be found, and in many cases nowadays European easy-chairs and settees add to the comfort of what, in its normal condition, is to the Western mind a somewhat unsatisfying splendour.

Indeed, apart from those localities where contact with Europeans has brought about a departure from, or modification of, ordinary modes, the houses of quite wealthy Chinamen not only present a small conception of comfort, but are in themselves ill built, though showy and ornamental erections. The majority of such residences in the up-country districts are straggling, one-storied buildings, gathered round two or more courtyards, into which the windows as well as the doors of all the apartments open, a blank wall confronting the outer world in chilling and repressive fashion. The roof is supported by pillars, generally of wood, the eaves being curled up after the manner made familiar by pictures of joss-houses and small temples. In towns, where the population is usually packed like sardines, rows and rows of mean streets may include some houses of two or more



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THE DRAGON THAT GUARDS THE FOHKIN GUILDHALL AT NING-PO.

stories, and the roofs will sometimes depart from the characteristic native style.

In the front of courtyard houses, either actually at the entrance or a little way from it, hideous carved monsters invariably find a place, and in poorer establishments will be represented by paper or painted monstrosities. The purpose of these great gargoyles—if an allied term be permissible—is to terrify evil spirits, that they may find no entrance to the home, for which reason the more frightful the appearance, the more admirable the "ornament" in Chinese eyes!

Speaking generally, and excluding all Westernized or modern establishments, Chinese houses are not provided with fireplaces, the heating and cooking apparatus varying from brick stoves to charcoal contrivances, according to the part of the country and means of the family. The

rooms in winter are, as in Japan, nearly always overheated and invariably underventilated, for the Chinaman has no opinion of fresh air, and a distinct aversion from water, cold or hot, in which last respect he differs materially from the cleanly Japanese.

In the houses of the poor, where the absence of means forbids sufficient heating, wadded garments are piled one over another, until the wearer resembles a barrel, and is hardly able to move about.

Windows may be of glass, but in middle and low class residences are more often of a stiff oiled paper of strong resisting power. Bamboo bead "screens" form the sole division between living and sleeping room in many homes, while even that apology is naturally missing when the space is very limited. Pictures are not usual even on well-to-do walls, but the *kakemono*, bor-

rowed from Japan, may often be met in quite mean town tenements, as well as in fine establishments.

The commonest and most characteristic article of domestic furniture is the coffin of the head of the family, which is the very last thing to be parted with to the Celestial counterpart of our pawnbroker.

Shop buildings are naturally without courtyards. As a rule, indeed, they have no wall on the street side at all, but lie open the entire width of the front, being closed in at night by shutters. The family life may be carried on in the background, with utter disregard for privacy, or, in towns, an upper story may be added for domestic purposes.

A whole volume might easily be written about Chinese houses, but space only allows of final allusion to the mat-shed home of the abjectly poor, made of coarsely

woven or plaited bamboo leaf on a framework of bamboo, the poles fastened together with fibre only. Such a "home" can be set up in half an hour, and taken down still more speedily, a convenience which further enhances its extreme cheapness. Perhaps the quaintest purpose to which these mat-sheds are put is when house-building proper is in progress, a mat-shed "umbrella" being then frequently erected over the growing brickwork to protect its newness from the inclemencies of the weather!

As for Chinese fashions, the blue ramie-made linen gown is, perhaps, the characteristic dress—at any rate, the one most familiar to the Western visitor, and, with slight modification in style, is worn alike by men and women of the lower, but not lowest, class. No clothes are "fitting," it being held ungraceful and indecorous to reveal the outline of the figure. Manchus

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A GROUP OF PEKINGESE WOMEN.

They are in the courtyard of a wealthy Chinaman's house. Most of the gowns are elaborately embroidered satin, the work of the weavers. Note the two types—the Manchu whose "unbound" feet are covered by her long robe, and the Chinese with tiny deformed "flower" feet showing below their loose divided garments.

and better-class Chinese women cover the head with various fanciful and handsome head-gears, but others go uncovered. The hair of the married woman is, however, always carefully dressed by the professional barber, a plentiful supply of oil-like glue being worked in to maintain the perfect finish, and jade-headed and other pins are employed for everyday ornament. The young unmarried girl wears her hair in a pigtail, which is never out of order, and as soon as her father is anxious to betroth her, scarlet silk threads are plaited in with the hair (which, if not naturally ample, is often eked out with horse-hair). This custom is not common to every province, as, indeed, few customs are. In the case of an attractive girl, her parents find it matrimonially effective to advertise after this fashion—that, at least, appears to be the origin of the practice among the lower

classes; and, after all, eager husband-seeking mammas are not unknown west of Mongolia.

The clothes of the better classes, fashioned in much the same manner as those of their servants, are made of the richest materials, beautifully embroidered, all kinds of fanciful ornaments and flowers being added to the head-dress and hair.

Apart from the big turned-up mandarin hat at one end of the social scale, and the wide coolie plaited sun-protector at the other, a small cap, little bigger than a skull-cap, but more outstanding and surmounted by a cord button, black or coloured, is the distinguishing male head-covering. It is intended to protect the crown, or sacred spot, never shaven, and the queue depends from under it. For a Chinese boy to attend upon his master or superior capless would constitute a grave breach of manners, a very real impertinence, though

this does not apply to coolies and chair-carriers. Thick felt shoes, and a hybrid stocking-puttee, into which the nether garments gracefully fade, complete male attire —which, again, in the case of the wealthy or official individual, is fashioned of beautiful silks, delicate-hued brocades, and gorgeous embroidery ornamentation.

Men marry young, and bachelors are unknown, with the exception of priests, hermits, and such folk, it being considered an offence against society to remain unmarried. What, however, possibly accounts for more than propriety is the necessity which every man feels to possess a descendant to worship his "tablet," and perform certain rites of a pressing nature after his own death.

Monogamy is the rule, but men may take as many secondary wives or concubines as they choose, and the children are all on

an equality, which complicates the *ménage* in such cases not a little. If the legal wife die, the widower may re-marry a "first wife," but no woman can marry more than once. In the ordinary monogamic home the wife is a slave, not only to her husband, but also to his mother, and in many cases the life is extremely bitter. The man himself very rarely uses personal violence towards his wife, but the mother-in-law may beat the new-comer unmercifully, and otherwise carry on an education that has probably been moderately stringent under the parental roof. The position of the wife is, however, immensely improved by the advent of a son, an event of enormous importance; but if the firstborn prove a daughter, she may have to endure many grievous insinuations against her character and ancestors. Childlessness is one of the seven reasons for which a woman may be

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THE ENGLISH BRIDGE, CANTON.

No Chinaman is allowed to cross without a permit, as it leads to the Foreign Legations.

divorced, though, unless there be some other motive at work, it is not usually resorted to, because of the necessity of returning her dower to the parents along with the lady. In the case where no secondary wife is taken to be "the mother of sons," a man will adopt a son—a relative, if one exist. Parker states that "the adoption of agnates is . . . of compulsion"—that is to say, a man over sixteen dying sonless is provided automatically with an "adopted" nephew in place of an ordinary heir, because it is not good for the family that any branch should become extinct in the male line—a point that illustrates strongly the influence of Chinese clannishness. In Celestial reckoning the family is the unit, not the individual. When strangers are adopted, it is usually a case of purchase from parents well provided with offspring, and too poor to support them all.

Another occasion for divorce, more potent than the childlessness which may thus be circumvented, is "over-talkativeness." A Chinese Mrs. Caudle is inconceivable, for she would promptly be returned to her father labelled "Too muchee bhoberry." Only by one means can the lady obtain any right whatever to use even the mild moral suasion wherewith the tactful Western wife is wont to turn events to her liking. If, as a bride, the Chinese woman succeeded in sitting on any corner of her husband's clothes at the moment when, half-way through the nuptial ceremonials, they first seat themselves side by side, she is understood to occupy the position of mistress in her own house; even then it generally stops at understanding. Imagination fairly boggles at the notion of a Chinese man suffering so much as a silver-tongued reproof from the insignificant creature, whose

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THE FAMILY MEAL.

They are of the lower classes. Their home, which is at Tientsin, was partially destroyed during the siege.

normal relation to him was aptly symbolized by prostration at his feet on the occasion of the initial bridal proceedings. From his mother, indeed, it would be necessary to endure even a vigorous cuff, but a lifetime of repression and submission to masculine authority makes such ebullitions extremely rare. It is only as mother-in-law that the Chinese woman arrives at her rights in the matter of the last word, and for an unpractised person she often then exceeds expectations!

Leaving out of account the very poor, the exigencies of whose circumstances override the ludicrous restrictions placed by custom on family life, the status of woman is clearly indicated by the household etiquette common throughout society. Man and wife do not eat together; her clothes must in no wise hang on the same hook as his, nor would she occupy his chair. Boys over

seven eat separately from their little sisters, and when the numbers of the family are being totalled many fathers will omit the girls altogether from their reckoning. The women of the upper class are secluded, of which arrangement foot-binding is at least one cause. When these ladies go into the streets, it is in a sedan-chair, wherein they are sheltered from the observation that their fine clothes would certainly attract. (But this does not apply to Manchu ladies, who do not bind their feet, and enjoy a far more reasonable share of liberty than most Eastern women.) Chinese women of other ranks walk about freely, and in South China take part in heavy manual labour, both brick-carrying and agricultural. An *amah*, or woman-servant, will, however, in no case demean herself by wheeling a perambulator, that being "coolie pidgin," and, accordingly, in treaty ports, the white babies are

wheeled by men, the nurse walking alongside.

Foot-binding, though on the decrease, dies hard, mainly because it is the one sign of comparative position which Chinese women recognize. No Manchu, of course, ever follows the horrible practice, so that when the Court comes into more close touch with society at large it is probable that the reform will move forward more speedily. Anything more pitiful than the wailing of the baby-girl undergoing the torture of foot repression it is impossible to imagine, and how any parents can bring themselves to dwell in the house with that perpetual moan,—rising at times into heartrending screams,—is beyond any European to conceive. The child suffers terribly for about eighteen months, and considerably for a much longer period. When finished, the foot resembles a small club, the toes turned

under the sole, and the instep drawn completely up. Chinese women, in argument with Europeans, are wont to point out that a maimed foot affects no vital part of feminine anatomy, whereas a compressed waist may be productive of grievous injury extending beyond the individual—a legitimate *tu quoque!*

The Chinese, like most Orientals, are very tender to young children, but the paraphernalia surrounding the birth of sons (and in South China of daughters) are peculiar to the country. Of course, the customs differ in different provinces, but the appearance of a chunk of raw ginger suspended over the main entrance announces a birth in the house, the Empire over. When the event is imminent, the mother-in-law burns incense before the household god or gods—a small representation of the goddess of mercy or of Buddha is the most usual, but

Photo. Halftones Limited.

THE GRAND CANAL, LOOKING TOWARDS THE EAST GATE

there may be others—and before the tablet of ancestors, and offers extempore intercessions for safe delivery and the well-being of the infant.

The newborn babe is swaddled for a month in the old clothes of elder members of the family, no other garments being provided till "shaving-day." This detestable custom is supposed to ensure the descent of some, at least, of the nobler attributes of the seniors to the infant, and some parents also believe that it affords promise of long life, especially if the clothes belong to an old person.

At the age of one month the solemn shaving takes place, the child receives its "milk" name, and is washed and attired in garments of its own, usually red. Fortune-tellers are employed for the selection of a lucky day, which, however, must never be later than one month after birth. A feast

is generally given on this occasion if the child be a boy, and always in the case of a firstborn son, the chief dishes being eggs dyed red and ginger served with vinegar, the latter giving its name to the feast, which is called a "ginger-dinner." Guests (according to Mr. Ball) are bidden to this merry-making by means of a red egg and a verbal message. The religious rites accompanying a shaving are uncertain ; but there is usually something in the nature of incense-burning to the household gods, and prayers to the ancestral tablets, with, in pious houses, visits to the nearest temple. The parents rarely—the mother never—take part in temple-visiting, but the ubiquitous mother-in-law convoys the child.

The subsequent birthdays of a child are not observed, but with characteristic contrariness the anniversary requires a ceremonial observance after marriage. Presents

Photo. Hafone Limited.

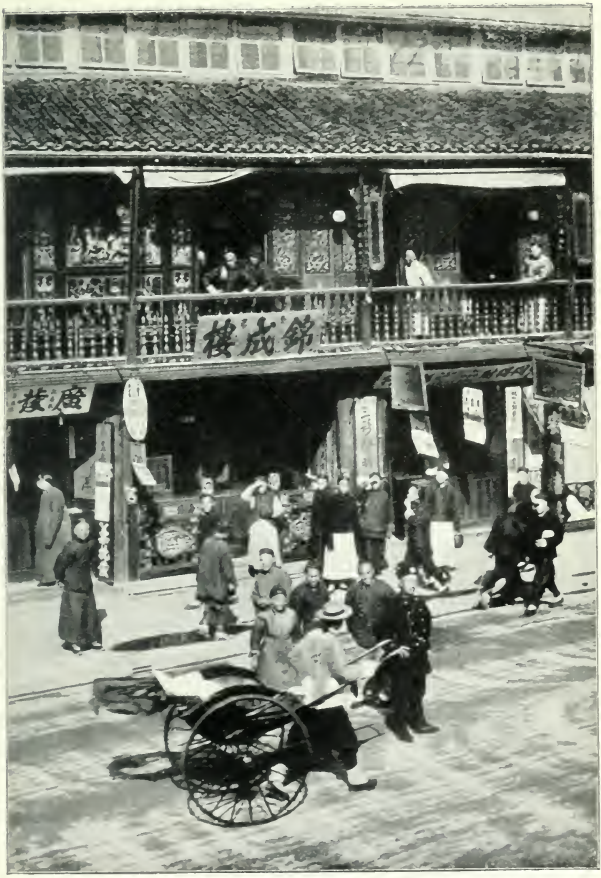
CAMELS CROSSING THE OLD SA-HO BRIDGE.

are sent by the parents-in-law, by friends and inferiors, not usually by relatives. Food and clothing are the most ordinary presents, though on the great "birthday" —the shaving-day at a month old—money is also offered.

Allusion has been made to the "milk" name, given at the age of four weeks. A Chinaman in the course of his life may have many other appellations, only his family name persisting through all events and circumstances. The "school" name is given when education begins, and yet another at marriage, while frequently to this is added a "degree" name, and always a posthumous style by which he may be remembered after death. The surname or family name comes first in every case. These extraordinary complications appear entirely commonplace to a Chinaman, who considers our simple procedure in the matter

of nomenclature hardly dignified. Especially is this true in professional matters. Few considerable traders call themselves by their own names. They invent a "trade style," which is set up over their shops to avoid the impropriety of thus using any of their own actual names. The trade style, like the Emperor's "time style," may be a mere flourish of trumpets. Mr. Li Wa Chang might, for example, adopt "Eternal Moonshine." as his trade name. Yet foreigners usually but erroneously address individuals by their trade style, a ludicrous mistake which always fills up-country residents, unfamiliar with Western ways, with mild astonishment. Girls have "milk" names only, known solely to their family circle, and at marriage they prefix the husband's surname to their own.

The family life in China, in the lowest classes and among the river population, is



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A STREET IN SHANGHAI.

This is Nanking Road. The shop is a native tea-house.

usually happy, and even in other ranks of society bright women, whose natural affections show no signs of being blunted, may be met; but there can be little gladness in many of these home lives, with their dreary round of uninteresting trivialities, their deadly sameness, and the absence of the love which plays the chief part in every woman's life whatever her colour. The children, of course, afford unending joy in their earlier years; but boys marry soon after they attain manhood (sixteen years), and daughters usually about the age of fourteen or fifteen. The advent of the eldest son's wife, however, advances the woman to that supreme office of authority—the mother-in-law—when, until a grandson is born, she holds a unique position, and even afterwards is still the real mistress of the establishment. A childless widow or divorced woman is abso-

lutely without joy in life; but their number must be extremely small, as they are rarely to be encountered in any part of China.

No account of Chinese family life could close without allusion to that most pitiful excrescence—the baby tower. Among the poor, where food for a large family cannot, perhaps, be gained, the practice still obtains of getting rid of the superfluous girl-children.

A melancholy, windowless structure, occasionally roofless, marks the landscape in many a solitary tract of country beyond the confines of a native town. A square aperture, with a deep ledge above the height of a tall man, is the only break in the dull wall. Upon this ledge a man lays his unwanted offspring and leaves it. The next comer pushes the helpless mite through the opening, and deposits his own burden in its place. By this means no man kills his own

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ON SHAMEEN ISLAND, CANTON.

This avenue of banyan-trees is in the foreign quarter.

child. It is expected that the fall following exposure will end the precarious life.

Christian missions establish watchers near many of these baby towers, and rescue the deserted infants, bringing them up in convents as *amahs*, teachers, sempstresses, etc., and occasionally it will happen that a child may be rescued by natives. This, however, is rare, as daughters are not wanted.

In the ramie and cotton districts, however, although the poverty is often extreme, all children are of value to the labourer, in that by the time they attain to the age of four they are able to assist in some part of the picking or stripping, and so may add more to the infinitesimal family income than they cost in rice.

Children do not, according to Western ideas, indulge in games—that is to say, they have few organized amusements with

regular rules and a fixed object of attainment to win ; but the trifling toys are innumerable, and appear to satisfy entirely the desires of their owners. Tops, marbles, coloured buttons, and paper lanterns, together with, for elder children, kites and balls, are the common toys, but there are many others. When brought in contact with Western games, the adult Chinaman will often become an excellent tennis and billiard player.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL CHINA

THE Celestial is an eminently courteous person, no less so in his way than the Japanese, though after a fashion less readily comprehensible by Western peoples.

In confidential intercourse, a Chinaman will often tell how dumbfounded he felt when first in contact with foreign habits. The deeper courtesies which every Englishman assumes as a matter of course to underlie characteristic external lack of ceremony are naturally not obvious to the Oriental, whose view that we are all semi-savage by reason of our faulty manners is really in no way unreasonable when it is remembered that he can only know the surface of things Western. As for the

other side of the shield, it is not without interest to mark the general scheme of etiquette adopted by any nation, for, as a rule, it conveys to the observant critic some insight into the mentality of the people who find it satisfactory.

The keynote of Chinese courtesy is a depreciation of self, not founded on humility, but on the supposition that a visitor is set on good terms with himself by an exaggeration of his importance relatively to that of the speaker. We do not regard as beloved the stranger whom we address as "dear sir," though the formula expresses a Christian ideal, and in like manner the self-depreciation of a Chinaman is entirely of the lip, and unmeaning, though it presents a Confucian ideal. Actually the Chinese are quite remarkably self-complacent. Their conversation, however, as the result of this principle of humility, is

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IN A CHINESE TEA-HOUSE.

Wealthy natives pass the time in such tea-houses in Shanghai.

largely taken up with the employment of honorifics towards the person addressed and all his possessions, coupled with contemptuous allusions to the speaker.

Personal questions being, in accordance with general contrariness, regarded as the highest form of compliment, the oft-quoted conversation in "An Australian in China" is extremely typical of ordinary intercourse between strangers. The opening phrases may be quoted:

"What is your honourable age?"

"I have been dragged up a fool so many years."

"What is your illustrious patronymic?"

"My poverty-stricken family name is——"

"And what your noble and exalted profession?"

"My mean and contemptible calling is that of a ——"

"How many honourable and distinguished sons have you?"

"I have —— little bugs."

"Sir, you are a man of distinguished virtue; I congratulate you."

[And the more in number the sons are the greater the amount of congratulation and the more extravagant the adjectival qualifications attached to the virtue of the speaker.]

The conversation may, but does not by any means always, continue in the domestic strain:

"How many tens of thousands of pieces of silver (daughters) have you?"

The allusion is to dowry, and the large sum named supposed to indicate that the inquirer assumes the person addressed to be wealthy, and his daughters endued with such great beauty that their matrimonial market price is bound to be high.

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THE WOO MEN BRIDGE AT SOO-CHOW.

It crosses the Imperial Canal.

Most probably, however, the questions will not include daughters, except in the case of some one who acknowledges to no sons; rather will the conversation tend to more important subjects:

"What is your princely income?"

"How much could your honourable magnificence make in one year?"

"How much money did you pay for the exquisite coat which adorns your illustrious person?" And so on, the answers being always depreciatory, and couched in indirect phraseology where possible, a simple affirmative or negative being considered uncivil. Any abrupt termination of the flow of a Chinese stranger's interrogations may always indicate to the foreigner either some failure of conversational courtesy on his part or an answer which has absolutely dumbfounded the other party.

An inexperienced English lady, for ex-

ample, having admitted to twenty years of age, and replied to the next inquiry anent offspring by the laughing rejoinder that she was unmarried, felt not a little disconcerted by the sudden termination of the interview. No Chinese lady of good position being still a spinster at so advanced an age, the interlocutor had been completely nonplussed by a reply which appeared to indicate some freak of Nature.

An amusing experience of the same lady, which has occurred, apparently, to many others, was connected with a visit paid her by the wife of a progressive mandarin. The Chinese caller had been extremely interested in all the arrangements of a European *ménage*, and had inspected everything with an eagerness and appreciation distinctly complimentary, until it occurred to her, after being shown various photographs, to ask to see a picture

of her honourable hostess's "exalted and illustrious father."

The production of a military portrait obviously overcame the visitor to the point of embarrassed stupefaction, and, making some Chinese excuse, she executed a speedy retreat.

The explanation lay in the fact, already touched on, that respectable Chinese families do not, or until quite recently did not, allow any of their members to enter the army, the profession of arms being disgraceful; hence the little lady, confronted by a soldier's daughter, was immediately seized with grave doubts as to the society in which she found herself.

It is not respectful to look a superior in the face, nor to wear spectacles in his presence—this last a perplexing rule never likely to enter the head of a short-sighted foreigner, who thus often unwittingly insults a mandarin or other official.

At dinner, tea, or other social functions the left hand is the place of honour, a host thus having his right arm at liberty for the defence of his guest against all and sundry dangers. Another anomaly which often forms a stumbling-block for the foreigner is that in offering anything, however small, to another, both hands must be used ; one only is a grievous lapse from courtesy.

Finally, the " official " cup of tea, which played so amusing a part in the Shanghai mixed Court some years ago. It is set down by a servant, no one paying attention to the incident. When the business of the caller is concluded, he invites his host (being also an official) to drink tea, which ends the visit. Should the caller, however, be unreasonable in the demand he makes on his host's time, and the latter have another engagement, he indicates his dying patience by handling the cup ex-

Photo. Halftone Limited.

CHIEN HEN OUTER GATE, PEKING.

This is the chief gate of the city.

pectantly, when the visitor is reminded of what is required of him, and beats a retreat. It seems a regrettable oversight of Western civilization that no scheme of etiquette has been provided for the courteous extinction of the bore who knows not the value of a busy man's time.

The chief social function among the Chinese is a dinner-party, which, however, of course includes no ladies—respectable women do not eat with men in genuine unwesternized China. The menu is extraordinarily long, and usually follows an order almost contrary to that of Europe, ending with bird's-nest soup where the host is sufficiently wealthy to pay for a luxury to which strawberries in January would be a small thing. The "soup" is slippery stuff, much more gelatinous than anything the West would call soup. The principal "stock" (the bird's nest) is merely dried

white mucus secreted by the swiftlet, a seashore bird.

The Chinese recipe contains the direction to remove any feathers that may be found adhering to the "nest"!

Another delicacy usual on big occasions is or bêche-de-mer, resembling big greenish worms. Frog is, of course, indistinguishable from chicken, and forms one dish at nearly every native dinner of a social kind.

The Chinese theatre is a fearsome entertainment, but its promoters appear to have solved the mystery of eternity, inasmuch as it seems wellnigh impossible to witness beginning or end of any play—it is always the middle. Scenic effect is not attempted, nor is *vraisemblance* of any overwhelming moment. The one essential is inordinate speech-making, violent action, and perhaps, above all, noise. Nevertheless, a Chinese audience always appears interested and

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ON THE SHAMEEN CANAL, CANTON.

pleased, and the theatre is distinctly a favourite amusement, although actors share with barbers the position of social pariahs.

Chinese music, likewise, is ear-splitting, the Chinaman being apparently almost without the idea of melody, and concerts as such do not figure among his recreations; but tom-toms and other instruments are included in every theatrical performance.

In ludicrous contrast with the solemnity of the average Chinaman's appearance is his favourite amusement of kite-flying. No European can wholly familiarize himself with the notion of the father of a family disporting himself in company with his contemporaries in age in kite contests of one kind and another, or even in the mere joy of watching his own paper or silk creation curvet in mid-air. That it does afford him extraordinary pleasure is, however, indisputable.

The other prevailing recreation is gambling in every form. All ages and ranks take part in this "amusement," though betting is largely confined to the results of the examinations. *Fan-tan* and a kind of roulette are perhaps the commonest games, but the varieties are far too numerous to remember, much less to mention. Skill is rarely required, a very fair example of the gambling "game" being a juggle with stick and rings. The croupier throws up the little rings from his stick, and the players bet on the number that will remain on the stick.

Of other amusements, the functions connected with marriage and the festivals are easily first. To begin with, these all afford opportunity for the display of gorgeous best clothes, and for indulging in those ceremonious courtesies dear to the Chinese heart. For a wedding (as for a funeral) the first thing is consultation with the

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NATIVE SHOPS IN SHANGHAI.

augurs for a "lucky" day, luck being concerned in an almost impossible number of directions, such as the birthdays of bride and bridegroom (which must never be the same day); the relation of both to the luck-days and birthdays of parents and parents-in-law; lunar arrangements; astral conjunctions; and hosts of minor events apparently of no possible concern with the matter in hand.

The essential of the marriage contract, by the way, is the betrothal, which sounds like a "bull," but is not. The marriage proper is merely the transference of the bride from the parental to the marital roof. The betrothal is arranged by a female go-between, who ascertains from the fortune-tellers about the luck of the case, and then offers the bride's family presents and asks for the girl in marriage. The contract has finally to be put in writing, and the pur-

chase money paid over to her father. Breach of promise cases cannot exist, because betrothal has made the marriage binding—on the girl at least—which appears to be the sole advantage of the procedure. But the transference of the bride after a period of strict and dreary seclusion—ending in the "days of wailing" for her removal from her father's house, in which mournful exercise she is assisted by young girl friends —affords great opening for a function. The trousseau is usually sent in advance, but the wedding presents—which all belong to the husband—often figure in the procession sent to fetch the bride. She is seated in a red marriage-chair carefully closed from the gaping crowd, and though dressed in her best, is, for this occasion, neither rouged nor enamelled, that her groom, when they meet for the first time, may see her face as it actually is! On

arrival at her new home, the girl, carefully veiled, is received by her lord standing on a high chair, to indicate his priority in all things. She prostrates herself at his feet in token of subjection, after which he removes the veil. After various ceremonies connected with ancestor worship, they enter the nuptial chamber, and for the first time sit side by side on the edge of the bed, and the guests pour in.

At the feast which follows, the bride waits on her parents-in-law as a servant, and only when this is ended is she herself invited to eat in her husband's home. After the sitting on the bed, the bridegroom himself plays an even smaller part in the function than his European counterpart. For the most part, he amuses himself with his young friends, and has the Chinese equivalent for a real good time.

There are four main and a few local and

subsidiary festivals in the Chinese calendar, of which the chief is New Year, falling in late January or early February. The feasting extends from one to seven days according to the means of the family, and forms, perhaps, the leading feature of the great event. But there are also the street decorations, which, at night, consist of many flares and thousands of bright paper lamps hung in festoons across the narrow alleys, as well as from nearly every window and door. In a crowded area the soft brilliancy of the many colour-effects thus produced is really beautiful, though excelled by a vision of lighted boats of a sampan community on river or sea. Paper decorations among the poor, and beautiful floral adornments among the better-to-do, are used to make the houses bright within, the yellow Chinese narcissus being one of the specially lucky flowers of the season. Young brides

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A CHINESE FISHING-BOAT ARRIVING AT HONG KONG.

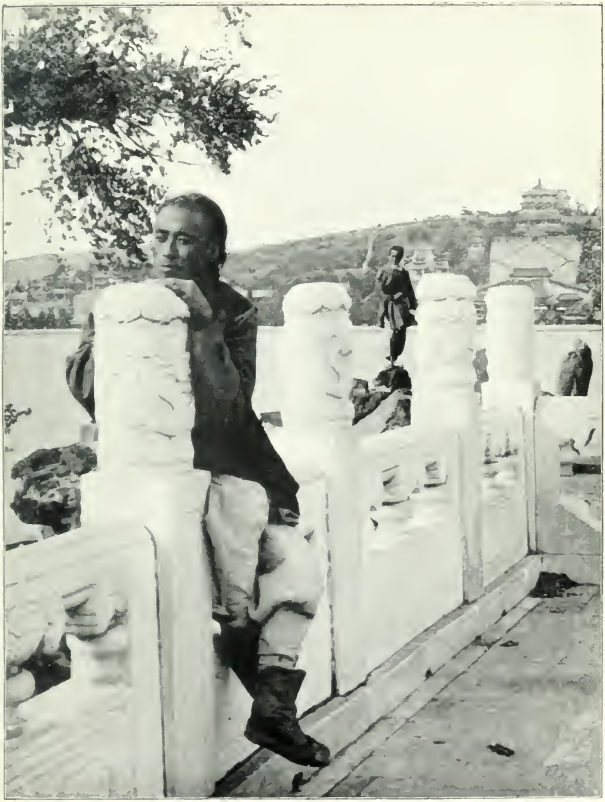
keep a pot in their rooms, and strive to arrange for a bud to burst open on New Year's Day, as that would indicate the advent of a son during the twelve months to come. For all ages and sexes it is extremely "lucky" if a personally tended narcissus should blossom on the festival.

Fireworks of all kinds are displayed at this time, and the letting off of crackers hardly ceases from one end of China to the other during seven days. The noise is deafening, but noise has no terrors for the Celestial, and the crackers will, it is anticipated, so terrify the evil spirits that none will venture to molest the merrymakers. There is really no occasion of note, even very small note, in any Chinese life wherein cracker-firing plays no part. No matter whether the event be public or domestic, this "devil distractor" is an essential factor, and possibly has some real value as a

sanitary agent. Processions with lighted paper animals—enormous dragons, horses, oxen, and other beasts—mimic houses, and grotesque images, also form a not unfrequent part of the festival proceedings.*

Cumshas, or presents, are, as among ourselves, an essential feature, and the gifts vary from valuable jewels to little baskets of rice-cakes or other trifles. To friends and acquaintances a tray of *cumshas* may be conveyed, it being intended that the recipient should make a selection and return a gift of his own. Unversed foreigners occasionally make the awkward mistake of accepting the whole of what is sent, to the confusion and dismay of the giver. Recognition of past favours usually takes the form of some kind of present, and New Year may suitably be chosen for the pre-

* The principle is the same as an ordinary Chinese lantern.



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A BIT OF THE FAMOUS ROYAL SUMMER PALACE.

sentation. Appreciation of favours to come also turns a veritable stream of splendid gifts into the *yamen* of every judicial mandarin. Nor even in the case of men who fain would be clean-handed is it possible to get out of the difficulty thus created. An English Hong Kong magistrate was in the habit of returning every New Year *cumshas* sent to him by Chinese residents, in case any litigation of the future should bring the donors before him. The act, so far from being comprehended, gave desperate offence, and though the principle was undoubtedly sound, a practice so sweeping and so subversive of every notion of Chinese courtesy and cordiality possibly did more harm than good. East is East and West is West, and this particular problem has not reached final solution.

At New Year time every reputable Chinaman pays his debts. It is accounted

a disgrace both to the individual and the family if a presented bill be ignored at this time, or a personal loan be left unsettled. In the latter case, the creditor will, if possible, avoid the appearance of pressing his client by inviting a loan (for the amount) to himself, and such a request is tantamount, at New Year time, to the presentment of an account in the ordinary way of trade. To meet their debts, men carry their worldly goods into the streets on New Year's Eve, and sell, almost regardless of price, until the required sum be made up and "face saved." Beautiful jades, bronzes, ivories, and embroideries, such as rarely come into the market at other times, may then be picked up almost cheaply, and, in a few extreme cases, even the household gods have given way to the pressing need for cash, and been ignominiously sold in the open street. This, how-

A PROCESSION OF MANDARIN BOATS DECORATED FOR THE DRAGON FESTIVAL.

ever, might entail such terrible consequences in the form of haunting demons and other ill-behaved spiritualities that the gods usually remain safe until every other stone is turned, and some families would even prefer "loss of face" to loss of protection against unseen evils.

At New Year time, solitary dwellers in remote districts leave their homes and seek some fellow-creatures with whom to rejoice, and eat boiled pork; while village dwellers often flock into towns on account of the more numerous excitements there available. Not a soul but rejoices, for the New Year is accounted every one's legal birthday; that is to say, no matter when birth actually took place, each individual is accounted a year older at New Year. A child may thus be legally two years old before he has attained two weeks, since he is called "one" directly he is born, and the New Year would make

him two, if actual birth occurred just before the date.

All other festivals fade into insignificance beside this great national holiday, yet the Dragon Festival in June or July, and that of the moon—to say nothing of the "Old Clothes Feast," wherein piles of impossible and filthy garments are solemnly burnt for the use of the departed in Hades—are really quite considerable occasions. The Dragon Festival was originally a river picnic, whereof the procession of snake boats—long narrow craft, rowed by forty or fifty men, and alight with coloured lamps from stem to stern both along the water-line and overhead—formed the chief feature. It sometimes falls out that a mandarin boat procession coincides with the greater event, when the gaily decorated, beflagged, and beflowered mandarin junks lie up along the bank to watch the passing of the

dragon, and let off crackers, to the perdition of malevolent spirit-observers. The feast has its origin in the dim past, when, tradition relates, some highly virtuous individual lost his life by drowning, and a year later boats went out to find the body. The anniversary has been kept ever since. The addition that the highly virtuous one was escaping from a dragon is extremely *ben trovato* in connection with the name of the festival, but is at least not an essential part of the story, which of course may have very many variants.

Since nearly every picture of Chinese crowds includes vehicles of one sort or another, a word about rickshas, chairs, and wheelbarrows may not be out of place. Rickshas, imported from Ceylon, are two-wheeled, light bath-chairs with a hood, but no front. The coolie runs between the shafts, another pushing from behind up the

steeper gradients. The Chinese rickshaman is probably the best in the world—faster than the Japanese, and more steady than the Cingalese, and his charge is very low. There is a considerable mortality among them from heart trouble.

Chairs, except that they may have covers and blinds for protection and privacy, resemble large wicker easy chairs on double poles, before and behind, with comfortable foot accommodation. They may be carried by two, three, or four bearers, who keep up a fine long stride, and cover the ground quite fast. They are much more comfortable than Japanese *kangs*.

The wheelbarrow, like the Pekingese cart, is characteristic of China, and may be found in use in nearly every part of the country. On either side of a large central wheel is placed a narrow seat, on which one person can, with much discomfort, sit, but which is often

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A CHINESE CARRIAGE IN PEKING.

A "Pekingese cart"—A typical Chinese vehicle without springs or seats.

made to accommodate two. The trundler pushes from behind, as in the European barrow, and, to his credit it must be granted, rarely upsets his passengers. Occasionally, however, in the uneven, slippery village street, the barrow tips to one side, and there being no sort of support, the occupants pitch straight into the mud, the swing of their fall upsetting the balance of the whole, so that those on the other side frequently fare no better. Collisions, too, will occur in towns where the ricksha has made an appearance, while the accidents that follow the wheeler's love for racing another barrow not unfrequently end badly for the passengers of both.

A Pekingese cart has neither springs nor seats. The driver is usually accommodated on the shafts, and passengers sit on the floor of the vehicle, which, however, is becoming increasingly a mere parcel-cart.

CHAPTER IV

COMMERCIAL LIFE

IT is commonly supposed that the gentlemen who organize trades unions are nothing if not ultra-modern and progressive; there is, therefore, a measure of humour in the statement of fact that trades unions, under the name of guilds, are as old as Confucius—that is to say, date before the Christian era, and have no little to do with the manifest defects, as well as the advantages, of commercial China. All tradesmen without exception belong to the guild of their particular trade, whether they are masters of considerable *hongs* or the veriest pettifoggers; outsiders are really inconceivable. The main object of these

guilds is, admittedly, to prevent underselling—wages and hours hardly come within the purview of organization, except in some half-dozen districts—but a limited amount of local administration is included in guild duties, such as the maintenance of the school and the urban police. To lessen the number of police, and thereby the *pro rata* contribution for their support, it is decreed that any person catching a thief is bound to prosecute, no matter what the circumstances, and failure to obey this law reduces the compassionate captor himself to the criminal category.

To the trades guild is due the arrangement by which, in a purely Chinese town, all vendors of one class of goods are grouped in the same street. Incidentally, this plan provides for the upkeep of roads, each guild being responsible for the area in which its trade is located.

This placing of like alongside like is very convenient to the purchaser, but always mystifying to a stranger. The actual motive is to ensure that every man charges no less than the right price for every article; should he fail to do so, the rival on his right or left, thoroughly conversant with market prices, would be certain to detect the misdoing and report him to the guild. But let it not be supposed that the foolish customer is taken into consideration. If Ah Fook can persuade a greenhorn to pay twice the value of a jade ornament, his compeers lie low, note the person of the client, and pray for similar luck or equal commercial skill. There is no maximum union price for anything; it is the minimum that matters: for to sell below that guild-fixed sum is to cheat the other members, and for the prevention of this cut-throat com-

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A KING OF BEGGARS.

This picturesque figure is the Chief of a Beggar Guild.

petition these organizations exist. The arrangement of like shops in one street facilitates spying, but the nominal reason given is that only thus can each guild determine for how much road-repairing it is liable.

If a tradesman be caught infringing a rule of his union, a hint is dropped to the local head of the Beggars' Guild, who details a specially loathsome selection of mendicants —lepers for preference—to pay assiduous attention to the offender's establishment. It will be understood, even by those who have not personal acquaintance with diseased Oriental beggars, that such invasion does not make for increased custom. If further steps prove necessary, various means are taken to trip up the evil-doer over some trifling police regulation, possibly invented for the occasion. The union chiefs then notify the municipal elders, in whose hands petty justice is largely vested, that dis-

ciplinary measures are required, and punishment is meted out accordingly.

A Beggars' Guild will probably surprise the most progressive white Labour leaders, but, in fact, it is of benefit to all society. Every citizen is rated by the Beggars' chief at some small sum in charity, which dole duly presented, no other beggars are permitted to approach the house. Failure, in like manner, induces a host of filthy, degraded, and horribly disfigured mendicants to group themselves perpetually around the doors of the offender, and to waylay him in the streets. It is a very real persecution, and the guild always wins!

Western scholars are wont to declare that the Chinaman, untouched by Europe, is incapable of arithmetic. Seeing what particularly good book-keepers and accountants they can become under white masters, this is probably a particularly extensive

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AT WORK IN A CHINESE SAW-MILL.

"bunder"! At the same time, it must be remembered that the Chinese child's education does not include the simplest ciphering, a fact which, repeated over countless generations, must have some result if there be meaning in heredity; and, moreover, the Chinaman of every age performs upon the abacus his commercial reckonings. This curious counting-table of balls upon little upright sticks fastened into a solid frame is in two divisions. The upper compartment has two balls—value five each—on each of its eleven sticks, the corresponding lower sticks having five balls, value one each. Units up to five are reckoned below, fives above. Thus, twenty-two would be represented by pressing down the first four upper balls, and pushing up two on the second lower stick. The speed with which the Chinese reckon on these cumbrous instruments is simply amazing; the balls fly up

and down like the keys in the machine of a very rapid typist; without it, hardly a shopman could make out your bill.

Money in China is a veritable puzzle, a tissue of trade-destroying anomalies. This is not the place for a disquisition on fiscal problems, either superficial or profound, and it suffices to say of such matters that they underlie the fabric of Chinese national life, and are largely responsible for the perplexing political, social, and commercial conditions now eating at the heart thereof. China will never rearrange society according to Western notions, even to the extent which has obtained in Japan—a movement far more shallow there than is commonly supposed—but the establishment of a standard imperial coinage, and of a single language throughout the Empire, must form the foundations on which alone a new and prosperous China will arise.

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LOOKING DOWN INTO SHAPPAT-PO STREET, CANTON.

Taken from one of the night-watch bridges which stretch from roof to roof across the street.

The ordinary native does his marketing to-day, as his father before him, in copper cash — small coins having a hole in the centre, through which they are strung together. Even cash vary in value, eleven being equal to one cent. Silver is now minted in several provincial centres, but no coin has a recognized standard value throughout the Empire, so that much of the large buying is done in *sycee*, or bulk silver, a sufficiently cumbersome method. The familiar tael of commerce is not a coin at all, but represents a given (variable) silver value, and most accounts are kept in taels.

Occasionally silver or nickel coins of common values have been introduced into this and that province, but not being recognized elsewhere, and their value fluctuating even in the locality whence they issued, tradespeople are always chary of accepting such coins. Of course, these remarks do not

apply to treaty ports, or Hong Kong, where more Western arrangements obtain to meet the commercial habits of Western people. Villagers, hawkers, small men of every kind, greatly prefer dealing in cash to handling minted silver; and so little confidence have they in such money that, in many parts, only silver coins with the *chop* or trade-mark of some well-reputed firm will be accepted. The *chop* indicates that the firm in question accepted the coin as payment, and pass it on in like good faith. *Sycee* has commonly to be weighed at each transaction, especially if vendor and purchaser be of different provinces, with varying standards of silver value.

Foreigners, though their relations are complicated by the variable nature of taels, do not necessarily come at all in contact with all these manœuvres, but they have some little difficulties of their own. Take,

Photo: Hanfstaengl Limited.

THE DOORWAY OF THE COURT OF THE TEMPLE OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS.

for example, a couple of actual bills presented for payment by Chinese, and written in phonetic "pidgin."

Aosfadd - - -	$0.50
Aosier - - - -	$3.50
Atakimomagen - -	$1.00
	$5.00

This account will probably stump the reader, seeing that it completely baffled the recipient, who had long lived in Hong Kong and Shanghai. The creditor had written it on a slip of paper without name or address, and handed it in by a coolie. When ultimately the bill with headed address came to hand, the mystery was, however, solved.

One horse feed - - -	$0.50
One horse hire - - -	$3.50
Taking him home again - -	$1.00
	$5.00

Here is another puzzle—in fact, the recipient took it to be intended for a conundrum:

WONG-HING.

Two boxes to order - -	$5.00
One wood do. - -	$2.50
One wooden do. - - -	$2.50
	$2.50

Rendered into English, the account should have run:

Two boxes to order.
One would do (*i.e.*, suit).
The other would not do (*i.e.*, suit).
The balance was, of course, the one purchased box, $2.50.

"Pidgin," literally, means "business," and the bastard vernacular invented under that name was intended merely to facilitate trade intercourse between foreigners and natives.

There is a "pidgin" French, too, but it is very little used, being unknown to the

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AN ANCESTRAL HALL.

This is the splendid hall of the great Chun family of Canton.

great multitude of Chinese except those resident in purely French settlements. "Pidgin" English extends throughout the country, wherever whites are to be found. It consists of some ridiculous English awkwardly pronounced, a few words of Hindustani, a few of Portuguese, and one or two of adulterated Chinese. It is really quite easy to acquire, but a new-comer will find himself entirely unable to follow any rapid conversation.

Some of the expressions are highly apropos. Witness the description of a bishop: "No. 1 piecee joss-pidgin-man"; literally, "God's chief man of business."

"Bhoberry," meaning noise, anger, fuss, and allied conditions, surely carries its meaning in its very sound.

"Fever," rendered "b'long inside too muchee hot," is also apt, if roundabout.

To start to go anywhere is usually

rendered "walkee," so that the captain of a steamer may be asked: "What time that ship can walkee," "can" being used in place of will or shall.

"At home" is rendered "got," and to the usual inquiry at the front-door, a stranger is apt to be mystified by the servant's reply: "Master no got."

Another curious point is the impossibility of any interrogative standing alone. To convey meaning it must be rendered: "Who *man!*" "What *thing!*" "How *fashion!*" and "squeeze" is an English word with a most characteristically Chinese meaning. "Squeeze" takes a recognized place in every transaction in which money or goods change hands—represents the percentage which each party draws from the proceeding as a perquisite. The compradore, having purchased in the open market, sells to the cook, charging a slight "squeeze" over

and above the legitimate retail profit, and the cook, in entering the proceeding in his mistress's book, adds a trifle for himself. If this trifle exceed bounds, an emphatic message is dispatched to the kitchen: "B'long too muchee squeeze," and a wise servant moderates his rate of attaining wealth. Nobody, however, dreams of setting his face against the system altogether, for "squeeze" is the recognized manner of carrying on business, and obtains from highest to lowest. Every official makes his squeeze out of those over whom he is set, both as a means of adding to his own income, and also as insurance against the inevitable squeeze to which he, in his turn, will be exposed at the hands of his superior.

The letters of Chinese tradespeople, written in pidgin, are often very amusing reading. Of course, only clerks, compradores,

and shop-people resident in treaty ports, require to write; personal servants and small traders are quite satisfied if able to converse fluently. Here appended is a real letter on a trivial subject from a Chinese clerk to his lawyer master.

"Honored Sir, Esq.,

"That honorable lady of your house [*i.e.*, your wife] has been in office at 45 minutes past 11. As she knew all this [*i.e.*, the position of affairs], she feared that ship would walk off, so she wrote one chit, and sent me to take it, with 20 cents as passage-money to go for those things. After I got all them from the captain, I took all to office, and the captain said no more, but only he had no time to return to the honorable chit a reply. There are three parcels of these things that you may keep from the coolie.

Photo: Halftone Limited.

THE FIVE PAGODA TEMPLE.

"With the exception of this I know nothing else, for the honorable lady came again no more.

"Obediently the servant.

"Yours truly,

"CHOK-CHUNG."

It is noticeable that not a single word is incorrectly spelled; and this will be found a feature of most of such letters—a fact that indicates no small care, ability, and perseverance on the part of Chinese youths; for it must be remembered that in their own language spelling is non-existent, owing to the absence of alphabet, so that the whole theory of our script is entirely novel.

Chinese folk of the trading and professional classes are extremely capable men of business, and gifted with no small insight into character. In commercial concerns a Chinaman's word is his bond; while the

general construction of society, which makes no individual a unit, but always a representative of a family, or guild, or trade, for whose collective good name he is responsible, adds very much to the general security in all matters of business. The Chinese regard our nation as pre-eminently the honourable nation among whites in commercial matters, and adopting the nation as unit, extend to travelling Britons a credit not easily obtained by others. "Englishman honour," as an acceptable guarantee bond, is one of the few things the Briton may be proud of in China. Even a little middy off an English man-of-war can obtain goods from shops on the promise to send a chit from the ship, or even to pay when his ship returns, so many weeks later. Some polite but absolutely unconquerable objection to like procedure with unknown officers of other nationalities

Photo. Halftones Limited.

SELLING FALCONS IN PEKING.

has often been good-humouredly related by themselves, and privately confirmed by Chinese shopmen.

Some of the most amusing and characteristic of petty traders are the hawkers and pedlars to be met in every town, and even in the open country, where it might very well be supposed they could not find any money-making opportunity for miles around. They carry in such cases an extraordinary collection of articles, from live pets—wretched cage-birds, as a rule—to sweets, from ginger to elderly cooked fish, and from cotton material to hot-boxes. These last contrivances no doubt suggested the instra of Western lands. A tin box, the size of a cigar-case, with a sliding perforated top lined with wire gauze, and a roll of twenty-five charcoal cigars done up in prepared paper, can be procured for fifteen cents or less. A lighted "cigar" placed in

the box speedily produces a "hot bottle," almost untouchable, which, by reason of the size, can be hung from the neck, or wrapped in some material and stuffed up the ample sleeves, to produce a delicious glow wherever heat is most desired. The "cigar" smoulders for hours, so the luxury is cheap.

Hawkers and pedlars convey their goods in two large baskets suspended from the ends of a bamboo carried either entirely on one shoulder, or partly on both, and such men walk enormous distances heavily weighted, apparently without suffering any inconvenience. Soup and tea merchants, who, with a little charcoal brazier, provide all comers with rice, and soup, and tea for a few cents, are common in towns. The public scribe, public barber, and public chiropodist are also familiar among street traders, although most of the better ones

Photo. Halftones Limited.

STREET TEA-SELLER, MOUKDEN.

are provided with tiny open shops—hardly more private, but more distinguished. A barber not only shaves the face and head, but cuts, greases, and "does up" the queue, cleans the ears and nostrils of his clients, and frequently the inner eyelid, a proceeding which probably accounts for much of the inflammatory eye trouble common in China. All these proceedings go on in the face of the world, no one's sense of propriety or the fitness of things being in any way injured thereby.

The public scribe writes at the dictation of any man or woman who may desire to send a letter, but who is unable to perform the effort himself. An audience often assembles to listen to the matter in process of committal to ink and paper, which one might suppose embarrassing for the dictator, but it never appears to be so.

As for manufacturing affairs, industry is

often arrested by the workings of superstition. Missionary writings have familiarized the home public with the native objection to churches with steeples — namely, that such lofty erections may offend the spirits of the air by undue invasion of their territory. For the same reason a chimney-stack belching smoke is intolerable to the country native, who argues that ill-luck will necessarily overtake the entire locality by reason of this departure from the seemly monotony of one or, at the most, two stories.

Up-country, the introduction of new machinery by a would-be progressive manufacturer generally bears no fruit, owing to repression by the guilds, which oppose the creation of goods by one member at a cost that will enable him to sell remuneratively below the fixed minimum price, and, as already explained, guilds for the most part get their own way.

CHAPTER V

ARTISTIC, LITERARY, AND AGRICULTURAL CHINA

AT first sound it may appear inappreciative, but, speaking from the foreign lay point of view, the outstanding characteristic of Chinese art is imitativeness. The Chinaman, especially in regard to modern work intended for foreign consumption, is not pre-eminently a creator, as is the Japanese artist, but he is extraordinarily deft with his fingers, and quick, not only to catch the conception of another, but to reproduce it exactly without destroying the innate intangible beauty, as sometimes happens in copying.

In architecture the pagodas and temples

give the accepted standard. There are, indeed, no other buildings both old and beautiful in the country, if excepting such other religious structures as the Pootung Tower, the entrances to shrines, and some of the approaches to the tombs, of which more will be said in another chapter.

As for painting, it is still in infancy, as a single quaint instance may show, without learned or technical disquisition. To represent relative distance, near things are painted below, and more distant objects at the top of a Chinese picture, the laws of perspective being but slightly honoured in the process. Detail in painting, as in the more characteristic bronze, lacquer, and ivory work of Chinese art, is most minute, while another point, the few strokes of the brush employed to attain a striking result, is also markedly characteristic. Painting

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A TYPICAL GATEWAY IN THE IMPERIAL CITY.

in oils is unknown, only water and comparatively rubbishy paints being the media employed.

The bronzes, and the lacquer, and the native china of the country are peculiarly rich and beautiful, the workers being true craftsmen in the sense that they love their work, and aim always at perfection. The patience displayed in avoiding or making good an even trifling defect accounts, no doubt, in large measure for the successes attained; but hereditary skill is a determining factor. Many of the best gold-thread workers in bronze belong to families or communities which have laboured at this branch for generations. The gold thread with which the ornate patterns are worked in gold is hand-beaten into tiny grooves prepared on the face of the bronze.

Most of the real treasures of beauty, delicacy, and finish in this, as in all other

Chinese art, are hidden away in temples and shrines, in imperial palaces and aristocratic collections, but the more modern examples often appear in the open market.

Silver is also used both for beaten and for encrust work, though more rarely, but a very fine effect is often attained by the two blended in the ornamentation of single objects. As for large bronze articles intended primarily for use, a rather surprising monotony is observable, the type shown in our picture (p. 237) of receptacles outside a Taoist temple being characteristic, and illustrating well the Chinese disposition to reproduce exactly in unlimited numbers and for unlimited periods of time. In this connection a parallel example in a very different plane has its amusing side. In a well-known European house, it happened that a new boy, on the first occasion he entered the drawing-room, found an overturned chair in

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THE AVENUE TO THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS, NANKING.

These and similar huge stone figures line the Avenue for the dual purpose of the service of the departed, and to frighten away evil spirits.

the otherwise well-ordered room. He carefully dusted and performed the usual duties, and before leaving replaced the chair on the floor. The lady of the house picked it up without comment. After this had happened several days in succession, she remarked on the circumstance, wondering whether one of the animals could cause the recurrence of the "accidents," which it was noticeable always took exactly the same form. Finally, it emerged that the boy considered it necessary to place everything as found, that being "missis' old custom." It took her another solid week to induce this artist to suspend his too exact imitative quality, which, however, in the domestic section has its advantages, in that a new servant will never place a single photograph or ornament in the most crowded room out of position.

To return from this digression. Chinese

ware is often very beautiful, but sometimes in even greater measure most curious. A bowl some six or seven inches high, in the writer's possession, is painted all round with the most amazing horses in elaborate and perplexing trappings. The artist had obviously small acquaintance with the noble horse, for the anatomy as depicted would afford occupation for many veterinary pathologists, and it seemed impossible to attach meaning to so unusual a subject of pictorial art. A Chinese authority explained that the bowl gave a native impression of the first advent of a European cavalcade, whenever that might have been—a point he could not determine, not knowing in what part of the country the article was manufactured. Probably the painter had never before seen a horse, and not being possessed of sufficient variety of pigments for his purpose, merely conveyed by means of a red, a spotted, a

Photo. Halftones Limited.

ON THE TERRACE OF THE MING TOMBS.

Showing grave of the Emperor Jung Loh.

white, a lion-brown, and a mauve quadruped the general conception of brilliancy of unfamiliar type which the procession had aroused.

Chinese lacquer is, on the whole, inferior in beauty and finish to Japanese. Lacquer itself is merely a vegetable resin furnished by a native tree when it attains maturity; the tree is tapped at night usually, the gum being gathered in the morning; but a very large plantation seems to be necessary for the provision of a quite moderate supply of gum. Throughout the process of preparation lacquer-workers say that this gum is a dangerous thing to handle, frequently inducing quite severe illness if in direct contact with the skin. This drawback and the length of time required for the full preparation of first-rate lacquer has much to do with the high prices demanded for this class of goods. Of course, cheap stuff for the

foreign market is not here under consideration.

First-rate lacquer-work, like bronze incrustation and other work, is largely kept in the hands of certain families, classes, communities, and districts, where the individuals employed attain wonderful hereditary facility. Perhaps this arrangement accounts in some measure for the fact that no individual names seem to stand out as skilful artists and creators—a piece of work being known to the native connoisseur as the product of such a district, not of such a man. Dr. Williams' "Middle Kingdom" gives valuable information on the whole subject.

As for embroidery, it is not essentially different from what may be seen in other Oriental countries, and has certainly fallen off in delicacy during the last century. Embroideries a couple of hundred years old will retain their brilliancy of colouring

far better than slips of the last twelve-month. One interesting point is the way in which a pattern may be exactly reproduced on both sides of the cloth, a matter that often causes questions until the process is witnessed. The cloth is stretched and set up in a frame, which stands on the floor between two workers, who embroider simultaneously with one needle and thread. A having made his stitch, B draws the needle through and duplicates it on his side, the thread, of course, passing back automatically to A. Although they work very rapidly—men perhaps a little faster than women—time is not nearly so much considered as perfection of pattern. It would, however, take a technical knowledge of the subject to deal adequately with Oriental embroideries.

One of the most artistic features of Chinese life is its caligraphy. The scribble of an

alphabetical language seems to the educated Chinaman positively indecent, for the native child will take weeks, maybe, in learning to make half a dozen perfect characters. His writing is, of course, all brush-work, pens and lead pencils being unused. Erasures, blottings, alterations of phrase, are unknown; the idea to be committed to paper can be conveyed by, perhaps, one character alone in the case of the ordinary man, though the *literati* pride themselves on the multitude of characters and combined characters in which they are able to set down their thoughts.

The educational system, if not admirable in other respects, is at least thoroughly democratic. The village child has every opportunity to attain to the highest prizes the schools have to offer, if he possess brains enough, and time to spare from labour to study for the great examinations. But, of course, the majority are too poor to afford

Photo. Halftones Limited.

COLONNADE IN THE TEMPLE OF AGRICULTURE.

the leisured years, and hence never get beyond that wearisome initial stage of learning by rote books of characters, meaningless, because the names of characters are not the vernacular names of the things themselves, but merely book-language—unknown titles. To this memorizing is added hours of writing—dull copying of similarly meaningless figures, with a view solely to manual dexterity in the matter.

But those who carry their school-life further do, after the lapse of years of this primary work, subsequently learn the meaning of what they know, and then proceed to reasoned study of the classics, which includes learning them by heart.

The confounding factor in a genuine Chinese school is the absence of classes. Each boy is a unit to himself, and studies without relation to any of his companions, thus eliminating the whole principle of emu-

lation. To the European it is a curious experience to enter a native school, where all the scholars, no matter their numbers or ages —elderly men will often be found alongside youngsters who have attained their opportunity at the normal period of life—are monotoning their respective tasks in various keys, regardless—perhaps unconscious—of all save their individual selves. The noise is consequently amazing, and must afford a liberal training in power of concentration.

The cumbersome system of examinations, towards which all education tends as goal, is too complicated a subject to be considered here; it is, moreover, all set down in hundreds of reliable text-books. It is, however, amusing to learn that at the great "finals," in which each student is locked up in a tiny cell, whence he can communicate with no one, and whence, if he should die, as happens from time to time, owing to the unwholesome

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EXAMINATION HALL, CANTON.

There are 12,000 cells, in which candidates are separately interned during the triennial examinations.

environment, his body must be removed through a hole broken in the wall of his cell, the doors being hermetically sealed till the conclusion of the examinations, it is yet possible to cheat! Students are carefully searched on arrival to be sure that no fragments of "crib" are concealed about their person, but evasion is, nevertheless, practised. The candidate's great stumbling-block is generally the essay, the one original effort he has to make throughout, and to smuggle in and copy a treatise by an abler man becomes a pressing necessity. The writer has seen a felt shoe, in which the heavy sole was carefully scooped out for the reception of the precious paper, a layer of felt being pressed atop. This device has proved successful hundreds of times. Another method is the insertion of a quill in the mouth containing a document transcribed in minutest character.

Ploughed candidates present themselves again every three years, sometimes during the best part of their lives, emerging finally as grey-haired pass-men.

This lengthy process perhaps accounts for one predominating quality of Chinese literature—the inordinate length of books. The finest novel of the language runs to twenty-four volumes, and a book corresponding in size to our six-shilling novel would be regarded as beneath contempt, unless intended for a primary school text-book.

Humour is not a feature of translated Chinese fiction, but certainly some of these works prove funny reading to the foreigner, though, for the most part, not particularly edifying.

In addition to the longest novel, China possesses in the *Peking Gazette* the oldest newspaper in the world. Genuine un-

Europeanized native journalism is the quaintest thing possible. The sheets, folded like writing-paper, with the edges to the centre, so that two leaves turn over at a time, make up into a little pamphlet some 9 to 11 inches in length by 4 or 5 wide. At the beginning or end three pages of printed character appear; the rest is pictures and a few advertisements, also pictorial. The outer colour is usually red, but may be blue, yellow, or brown.

Journalism is not a very remunerative occupation, as a single copy of a newspaper will pass from hand to hand through an entire street or district, the printed matter being read aloud for a few cash by a public scribe. That, however, perhaps matters less, in that numbers appear irregularly; and a "journal" will often appear but once, in which case it usually happens that some individual has a grudge to pay off, and has

employed a scribe to issue, in pictorial form, a scurrilous attack on his opponent, the meaning of which it will, however, in case of need, be possible to deny entirely by pointing to the pretty little moral story in the written matter, which the pictures are intended to illustrate. Defamation! Perish the unworthy notion! These papers are now confined to distant country areas, and are jealously guarded from Europeans, but from collections thirty years old the general characteristics are readily gleaned.

A little sketch of a modern newspaper, as advertised by itself some while back, will afford an amusing conclusion to the subject of journalism: "This Gazette will contain all that it is fit to know . . . therefore all will, of course, hasten to purchase it, and it will be every master's duty to make sure that his subordinates also become regular subscribers." [European managers should take

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LAMA PRIESTS AT THE TUNG-HO KUNG, THE GREAT LAMA TEMPLE IN PEKING.

note of this wise arrangement, by which no newspaper need close down.] "The chief object of the Gazette is the enlightenment of the people, therefore nothing political or trifling will be permitted to appear, and all jokes, detraction of character, improper discussion of State affairs, and all things strange and improbable, will be rigorously excluded." Finally, "Bribes will not be extorted."

From such flowers of speech it is easy and natural to pass to flowers of fact.

The Chinese are extremely fond of flowers, with which they adorn their houses in the country; but it is, perhaps, more particularly in gardening itself that this passion is most characteristically expressed. They excel in miniature. A London back-yard is simply palatial, in point of area, to the tiny mounds out of which a Chinaman will create an entire landscape garden—this, too, in the

midst of dirt and remediable squalor, which offend him not at all. That particular contrast always confounds criticism, for it seems natural that an individual who rejoices in turning a dunghill into a little beauty spot would also be at pains to make the immediate surroundings of his creation in keeping. But no, he will build a microscopic rockery, and train little streams thereover; he will, at great pains, make doll's-house fountains, and plant diminutive plants and dwarfed shrubs at quaint angles, with a view to general effect; he will work at the whole in all spare moments, and take childish delight in the result; but will, at the same time, remain wholly indifferent to a pathway strewn with garbage, unweeded, uncared for, running right alongside, and entirely spoiling, to other eyes (and noses), the tiny garden. Contrariness again!

Parts of China abound in beautiful flowering trees and shrubs, and whole districts in early spring are brilliant with azalea, wistaria, poinsettia, and later with jasmine, oleander, and lilies. There are, however, no festivals of flowers corresponding to those practically national occasions in Japan, when the whole people throw work aside and go out for a day or two into the wealth of Nature's garden. There is, in a word, some lack of sentiment in the Chinaman's love of flowers, as in his other relations, which, readily felt, is yet impossible of definition.

For larger spheres than the back-yard he is, perhaps, the most successful gardener in the world, though the Celestial idea of horticultural beauty—exact patterns, dwarfed trees, and shrubs cut into curious shapes—does not commend itself to European taste. The pruning of box-hedges and

other close-growing shrubs into grotesque figures, such as a cow or pig, a child or house, is peculiarly Chinese. The gardeners undoubtedly admire these abortions *per se*, but in view of general prejudices and superstitions, it is possible that at the outset the idea was connected with spirit-frightening, as with other strange figures in paper, wood, and stone, placed outside houses and at entrances to places of public attraction.

Remote rural China is naturally, for the most part, peopled by agricultural labourers, excepting, of course, the areas where some special trade, such as bronze-work, has become an occupation of a community. And it is wonderful with what small resources Chinese can attain comparatively successful agricultural results. As a whole the land is, indeed, watered, but so densely populated an Empire needs to reclaim country that

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PADDY-FIELDS AT MATIN, KIANGSI PROVINCE.

might generally be supposed useless. Dry, steep hill-sides are everywhere converted into terraces of growing crops by means of great wheels, with buckets attached, of which the lowest and largest is in direct communication with some good river in the valley below. Water thus pumped up is conveyed from terrace to terrace, and distributed by the agency of the smaller wheels at each level. It is stated in handbooks, which no doubt have verified the figures, that many hundreds of tons of water are raised by a wheel each day. Rice is the most widely distributed crop; but though cultivated on these terraced grounds everywhere, the largest areas are naturally in the flat country, where the great quantity of water necessary—a paddy field is a small lake of mud, with intervals of unadulterated water—is readily available. Ploughing is generally done by an ox, but mule or donkey, or

even human labour, is quite common, anp the usual machine will only penetrate the soil 5 inches. The triangular harrow is yet more primitive, being merely rows of iron teeth fixed in a wooden frame, upon which the driver sits, that his weight may sink the teeth in the soil.

Hand labour, though it is rare to see a peasant digging, naturally prevails to a great extent in a country mainly filled by small proprietors, who can afford no assistance beyond what can be provided by the family. Every one, from grandmother to baby toddler, however, lends a hand, and the result seems about as effective as proper implements would bring about, though the expenditure of energy is much out of proportion. Millet and other grain is generally ground in a mill, somewhat after the ancient English pattern, and such as still obtains in Syria, the handles being turned

Photo. Halftones Limited.

GRINDING MILLET SEED.

The mill is being worked by an old Chinese woman and her son.

by human labour in cases where no donkey forms part of the farm stock. Cotton and ramie, the fibre so little known in Europe (though of growing demand), cover considerable areas, and the whole process, from seed-sowing to stripping and preparing, is usually in the hands of the same people. During harvest it is no uncommon thing to see three or four generations toiling practically day and night to strip the ramie fibre fresh, when degumming is much easier than after the plants have dried. The coarse fibre ribbons are packed off to the towns, where the necessary further treatment accounts for immense waste of material, which proper and immediate handling would save for manufacturing purposes.

The immense fields of poppies, extending often over miles and miles of country in many parts, must certainly be regarded not

only as a characteristic, but as a very beautiful feature of Chinese scenery, whatever the moral aspects of that vast opium trade of which they are the visible symbol. The deep green leaves and brilliant flowers present a colour scheme it would be difficult to better or describe. The drug is taken from the stem, which exudes when cut, and the crop is further profitable because the seeds give a useful oil, and the harvesting occurs in time for the ground to be utilized in the same year for other crops.

It is not possible to pass over China's staple product, although there is little more to be said about tea—a name, by the way, which is merely a corruption of the Chinese term (pronounced *tay*). Because it is the national drink, every peasant in suitable districts has a small patch of the coarser kinds, and prepares his meal by the simple process of pouring water on the

green leaves. When harvested for trade, the leaf, after drying at a charcoal fire, is trampled with naked feet for hours to get rid of all remaining moisture. The lowest class of dust is afterwards steamed to produce coagulation, pressed, and made into solid blocks called "bricks." Hence the term "brick-tea" for the poor article.

Silk-worms also afford family occupation over large districts, the women and children being extraordinarily quick and facile in winding off the cocoons—a very important matter where "stoving" arrangements are not perfect; for if the grub be not effectively killed, it will eat its way through the silk in a few days' time.

The subject of rural China would indeed be incomplete without reference to cormorant-fishing, by which no inconsiderable number of men still earn their living in some of the provinces.

The cormorant is one of the swiftest and strongest swimmers among birds, while the depth to which it dives permits of but rare escape on the part of the hapless piscine victim.

The fishermen go out in tiny sampans or rafts with their one, two, or more birds seated on the edge of the craft, and attached round the base of the neck by a hempen string. As the bird dives, the loop automatically tightens, so that on regaining the surface with a catch, the prey is not swallowed, but still in the beak or gullet, whence the fisher removes it to the Chinese equivalent of a creel. He then loosens the throat-loop, and the process begins again. To the Oriental imagination there is nothing distasteful in eating food thus trapped by cormorants, and, indeed, the culinary processes of China probably cover little incidents of a much

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FISHING ON THE GRAND CANAL, PEKING.

more startling nature. He is a wise man who knows when to be ignorant.

Speaking of the Chinese cook recalls his method of giving a character of his employers to an in-coming successor, the humble saucepan being the instrument of his communication. If standing on the floor neatly covered, the place is a good one; if the lid be reversed, it means that the departing servant purposes to return at the earliest moment, having only left to transact some urgent business. The lid half on, half off, indicates that the last cook left through circumstances unconnected with the household, and was thoroughly satisfied. Rice at the bottom of the pan signifies great difficulty in exacting squeezes, and a disposition in the head of the house to be stingy. The lid lying on the floor beside the pot means a hard place and frequent shortage of servants. The saucepan upside

down tells of a "No. 1 bhoberry master" —*i.e.*, hot-tempered—while laid on one side, it means that the whole family is difficult to please. If the pot be left on the stove inverted, it may be to suggest that there is doubt whether wages will be forthcoming regularly; while if it is the custom of the house to stop for breakages out of wages, the bottom of the pot is chalked.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS LIFE

OF China it is perhaps more true than of any well-known nation of the world that there exists no religion. Mention of monasteries, temples, pagodas, and joss-houses, to say nothing of priests and hermits, gives the superficial lie to any such statement; but, after all, these things form the setting necessary to most religions, but not the thing itself. Moreover, it is a fact that three "isms" coexist in China very comfortably side by side (to make no reference to the numerous lama temples and monks), but they are merely "isms" remote, for the most part, from the real spirit of man.

Confucianism, for example, is a system of moral philosophy, of irreproachable ethics and social manners, such as must commend itself to the most convinced Christian. The gospel of this "ism" is contained in "the classics," which every educated Chinaman spends the greater part of his school-life in learning by rote. On to it was grafted at a very early period that ancestor-worship which forms the nearest approach to religion known to the devout Chinese. A temple to the great sage exists in every city of the smallest importance, wherein a wooden tablet to his memory is the main object of veneration. Twice every year the Emperor visits the Temple of Heaven, and there offers in state the accustomed reverence and ceremonial to Confucius, while every boy and man in the country performs like worship at stated intervals. The act is really more akin

Photo. Halftones Limited.

NORTH ALTAR, TEMPLE OF HEAVEN, PEKING.

to a national memorial than to any religious service as Western people understand that phrase. There is not the smallest reason why a Christian Chinese should not perform the ceremony, if once the fundamental difference between the two meanings of "worship" were made clear. No one suggests that the English individual who kneels before the King is thereby denying his religious faith and "worshipping" a mere man. An extraordinary amount of misapprehension exists in Europe on this subject. The actual ceremonial involves a good deal of kowtowing and the burning of incense, and, in schools, excerpts from the sage's works are frequently recited.

Taoism is more of a religion than Confucianism, *tao* being in the original a word which defies translation, but has considerable relation to the Greek λογος. This is

not the place for a dissertation on the outlook and tendencies of Taoism; suffice it to say that the whole mass of idolatry and superstition which surrounds the cult now, is the accretion of centuries, and no way represents the doctrine of Lâo-tsze, the founder. It is noteworthy that while the educated and virile Chinaman ridicules Taoism in the ordinary way, he relies upon its priests and those of Buddha in every hour of danger and when he comes to die. Confucianism has nothing then to say to him!

Finally we arrive at Buddhism, most generally represented in the pagodas and joss-houses scattered over the face of the country. Pagodas, by the way, are idol-houses constructed with a peculiar form of tower, having any uneven number of stories from three to eleven. It is remarked that very few are now erected, the majority dating back many centuries.

Religious Life

An illuminated pagoda is one of the most beautiful night-decorations of China. Joss-houses are the ordinary small temples, or idol-houses, built from time to time as the exigencies of a moving population require. The one near the "Bubbling Well" outside Shanghai is a quite favourable modern specimen. There are several versions of the "Bubbling Well" story afloat among Europeans, but a Chinese *amah* relates the incident as follows:

A certain young woman of low but wealthy parentage, having "married well," from the social standpoint, and attained apparently to a somewhat high standard of affection for her elderly husband, found herself in the unhappy predicament of threatened divorce owing to her childless condition. Her lord having given her but one more calendar year to fulfil the obligation of presenting him with the necessary

son, she wandered forth alone to bewail her fate; for the equivalent of perpetual "old maidhood" lay before her, and she was but twenty-three years old, though married eight years. She sat by the well and wept to all her gods, her tears falling into the little streamlet. Presently the silent waters began to bubble furiously, whereupon she rose up, and, adjourning to the nearest shrine, told a priest the story, and vowed that a proper joss-house should be built as near to the spot as possible if a son was born within the twelvemonth. It fell out as she desired, and the joss-house was built. The proof remains in the fact that the well still "bubbles." This is authentic history without doubt, unless, of course, some one of the other accounts is correct, or the well had bubbled from all time. The faithful historian is discreetly silent!

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IN THE TEMPLE OF THE FIVE HUNDRED GENII.

This Buddhist temple in Canton was founded in A.D. 500.

Religious Life

Whatever the nature of the various "isms" (concerning which some valuable authorities exist), it is certain that the temples which form their outward expression are often extremely beautiful after the Oriental fashion. The Temple of the Five Hundred Genii at Canton, a fine structure in itself, is one of the most interesting in the province. The genii are disciples of Buddha, and the variety in their pose and expression is really most remarkable. The majority strike the Western observer as either more smug or more humorous than might be expected of the assistant founders of a faith not particularly cheery. The suggestion that the Five Hundred Temple in part derives its name from the circumstance that it was begun in the year A.D. 500, is unhappily more *ben trovato* than accurate. The Chinese do not reckon their years from the Christian era. Still, that is a

mere historical trifle to which it would be pedantic to attach too much importance. Near Peking there is another numerical temple, where no fewer than 10,000 Buddhas are provided for the worship of the faithful. This worship, by the way, consists mainly (so far as the uninstructed onlooker can ascertain) of the beating of gongs and bells, and the burning of incense-sticks. A quaint modification of a method of intercession known to many religions may be witnessed most days in any large temple. Enter one of the faithful—man or woman—who prostrates himself before an image, probably prays, or at any rate presents a petition after burning an incense-stick. Delay being hard to bear, the devotee rings a gong, and a priest appears with a bundle of tiny papyrus rolls like pieces of wide-stemmed dry grass. He offers one, selected at random, and receives a small

payment in cash. This missive contains the god's reply to the petition—either affirmative, negative, uncertain, or irrelevant. If not satisfied, the person purchases another answer, and so on till he gets the one desired or his "cash" are exhausted. He then prostrates himself anew, burns another stick of incense, and goes away contented.

There are also, of course, many services and occasions when the priests themselves act as go-betweens in the offering of worship and petition. To a formal service it is difficult to obtain entrance, but a Taoist or Buddhist priest may often be seen offering burning incense in huge braziers, to an accompaniment of rhythmic prayer, or occasionally an unedifying silence. Priests are greatly in demand at and after funerals, to offer the equivalent of Masses for the dead, and their robes on these

great occasions are extremely gorgeous. Wealthy families, who guard the entrances to their tombs with stone dragons to terrify away evil spirits, and domestic images for the use of the departed in another world, will sometimes include a fully vested stone priest for the perpetual service of the souls gone before—the best examples being often double life-size, as in our illustration. A main office of the lama priests would appear to be the mechanical turning of the temple "prayer-wheel." When Yuan Shih-Kai's mother died two or three years ago, the Empress Dowager signified her sympathy by paying for seven priests to offer unceasing prayer-wheel petitions for the lady's well-being in the nether world, during something like nine days and nights!

The lama's position in the eyes of the people at large is, however, considerably

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A HUGE STONE PRIEST.

He is set, "for the service of the dead," in an avenue of monuments leading to ancestral tombs.

lower than that of the officials of the other "isms."

A Buddhist ordination, by the way, is an ordeal of the most trying nature. The examination extends over several weeks, during which time all candidates are housed in the temple precincts and given hospitality. The candidates may be any age—twelve not unusual, fourteen to eighteen ordinary, and mid-life not unknown; all have received preliminary instruction in the Priests' School before the great occasion, which during the last few weeks continues from dawn till midnight daily. The Western schoolmaster will fain learn how to keep his pupils awake during such protracted hours of study, but the object in this case—to test endurance—would seem gained. In addition to instruction, the budding neophytes are at this period of their training put through all the services

they may hereafter be called upon to perform, until every detail of ceremonial is ineffaceably stamped on the memory.

Actual ordination takes place at night, and in China the candidates do not know the evening selected till a few hours before the service begins.

Officiants are divided into two groups, one of which is occupied throughout the ceremony in intercession for those about to be ordained. The remainder, arranged in a triangle, of which the preacher forms the apex, chant a service of praise during three hours before the great Buddha. Candidates meanwhile are called up individually to take the vows of celibacy, obedience, and abstinence from specified forbidden pleasures. An oral examination in faith, ritual, and practice, concludes this introduction to the proper initiation. Three hours' silent prayer follows for the candidates, while the

priests retire to sleep and revest. When the preacher returns, he "charges" the ordinands, offers incense, and then makes way for the ordeal by fire. The candidates kneel in their places, and two priests approach each; one holds the head, while the other affixes the scarifiers—charcoal sticks, cone-shaped and an inch long. These, to the number of twelve, are fixed in three rows on the shaven scalp. At a given signal an assistant lights each stick: the charcoal quickly burns through to the skin, and then for two minutes has to be endured in full glow, after which the priest blows the ashes away, leaving the twelve burned spots of completed ordination. The new priest has only to prostrate himself again, and he has sealed his dedication. "Occasionally a weakling will faint under the ordeal, or, still more rarely, shrink from the torture; in both cases he is held in his kneeling

position by priests, the validity of his orders remaining unimpaired by the incident. As a rule, however, even the little boys display much fortitude, notwithstanding that half these children do not enter upon their vocation by choice, but as the result of parental vows or family custom."

Besides priests, hermits may be occasionally met in China. Their religion might not inaptly be called the cult of the unwashen, for a primary vow is nearly always against cleanliness. A hermit once "on view" near Shanghai enclosed himself in a bamboo cage, in which he could neither sit nor lie, where he bound himself to remain for periods varying from six weeks to two years, emerging only for one half-hour daily. During the period of his vow he neither shaved, washed, nor cut his nails, and depended for rice and water on the charity of the faithful. At the end of

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TAOIST PRIEST OFFERING INCENSE AT THE EASTERN TEMPLE, PEKING.

a few weeks he looked like a wild beast, so what he can have been after long incarceration it is impossible to imagine. Fortunately, perhaps, he died during an unusually lengthy attempt.

Reference has been made to household gods, the little Buddhas hidden away in some corner of most homes, before which incense is burned in moments of domestic crisis. Sometimes instead of the ordinary image, and generally in addition, a wooden tablet of the family ancestors will afford opportunity for the devout. Incense is usually burnt twice daily, and at certain times the family prostrates itself collectively. The Chinese ancestor creed provides every married person over twenty years of age with three souls—one in Hades, one in the grave, one in the tablet—and the worship of the three involves providing for the comfort of souls number one and two

by forwarding to them food, money, etc., and of propitiating all three, that they may avert misfortune from the living. The whole elaborate theory forms a not illogical crown to the excessive value which Confucian morality attaches to filial piety. Gifts for the departed are merely paper shams, and their dispatch is arranged by fire—all kinds of things being burned in cheap effigy for the satisfaction of the dead.

The superstitions about the dead include some beautiful ideas, which are brought into much less prominence than those which appear to Western people so strange in a progressive people like the Chinese. Not every visitor, for example, learns the meaning of the wide slab of carved marble or jade which in a temple staircase often occupies all the central space of the flight. It is called the "spirit stair," in contradistinction to the wide steps that flank it on either

side, and is reserved solely for the passage of the spirits unseen as they flit among their living descendants.

The funeral of a Chinaman is naturally the most momentous event in his career, as is evidenced by the proverb "The most important thing in life is to be buried well"; and the ceremonial is extraordinarily elaborate and complicated for all ranks of society.

There are certain imperial roads across which a corpse must not be borne, lest it imperil the health of the Son of Heaven—a fact impressed on English minds by the misunderstanding which, many years ago, nearly brought about an act of war, when Chinese authorities barred the passage of the funeral cortège which bore ashore the body of a little middy from an English man-of-war.

When a man dies, all the external para-

phernalia of his house (lamps, doorsteps, signs, etc.,), normally red, are changed to white, the mourning colour of China. The family wails around the coffin seated on the floor for seven days, during which time, since cooking is forbidden, they are dependent on the kindness of neighbours for their rice. Sackcloth is worn, or white garments (and in some provinces blue), and mourners may not shave or cut their nails till after the interment. The ceremonies connected with death recur every seventh day for seven periods, a curious parallel with Jewish ceremonial. One of the earliest and most peculiar of the rites is "the buying of water." The eldest son, accompanied by a musician playing funeral dirges on an out-of-tune instrument, visits a pool of water, throws in cash to appease the spirit who dwells there, and carries away a bowl of water with which to wash the corpse.

Photo. Halftones Limited.

PAILOW AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE STONE AVENUE LEADING TO THE MING TOMBS.

This is generally considered the finest marble pailow (memorial arch) in China.

Water in the house is never used for the purpose. The date of the interment is decided, not by sanitary conditions, or the convenience of the family, but solely by the dictum of an augur, whose business it is to find a lucky day for the soul to depart to its last rest. He also sets forth the nature and number of the religious rites—as, for example, in a native novel quoted by Mr. Dyer Ball in his admirable article on Chinese funerals: "During the forty-nine days . . . 108 Buddhist *bonzes* should perform in the Main Hall the High Confession Mass, to ford the souls of departed relatives across the abyss of suffering. . . . That, in addition, an altar should be erected in the Tower of Heavenly Fragrance, where nine times nine virtuous Taoist priests should for nineteen days offer up prayer for absolution from punishment, and purification from retribution; and that after these

services . . . fifteen additional *bonzes*, and fifteen renowned Taoist priests should confront the altar and perform meritorious deeds every seven days."

When the augur has settled dates and arrangements, and also what persons it will be "lucky" to have at the funeral, the ceremony proceeds. The procession to the grave is always headed by hideous figures, to frighten away evil spirits, and includes, besides mourners and servitors, priests, both Buddhist and Taoist, and other persons, a large number of paper gifts to burn at the grave. Custom does not require a man to wear mourning for his wife and children; it is a matter of choice.

Graves vary from the stately tombs of kings and nobles—beautiful groves approached by avenues of gigantic stone animals designed for the protection and service of the departed—to humble little

mounds in scattered fields, while the bodies of children—coffined or not—are often thrown into the sea or river, and hardly attract attention when washed ashore.

The ceremonials connected with death are practically universal, their omission or modification in the case of Christians marking, perhaps, the most essential difference between converts and other Chinese, a difference which causes less pain in the case of Roman Catholics, who substitute for one set of complicated ritual religious observances yet more stately and impressive. In this connection it may be remarked, without entering at all on the grave spiritual issues underlying so great a subject, that if the evangelization of China could have been left in the hands of Roman and Anglican Catholics, the great part of those political troubles which have arisen out of the "missionary question" might have been obviated.

Ritual, vestments, incense, processions, lights, music—all these things appeal to the Chinese sense of fitness, and provide the only setting suitable in his mind for persons and things of primary importance. European Ambassadors and their retinues, and European missionaries alike, do distinctly magnify their office and their message to China by outward display, a factor often neglected by both.

The division of Christians into "largee wash," "smallee wash," and "no wash," has certainly a flavour of humour. Denominations which practise total immersion are "largee wash"; those which have no baptismal office "no wash," while the affusionists are all lumped together as "smallee wash"—an explanation which dispels the perhaps natural first impression that the laundry of individuals is supposed to bear occult relation to their theological views!

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LAMA PRIEST TURNING A PRAYER-WHEEL.

Religious Life

To revert to the "isms," travel in China and intercourse with natives goes very far towards discounting any notions of fanatical religious convictions, such as might be suggested by the numbers of the temples, pagodas, and joss-houses, or by the accounts of riots against foreigners, which European papers so often attribute to hatred of Christianity. The typical Chinese is extremely tolerant of any eccentricities on the matter of creed, for the simple but sufficient reason that he has none of his own to be disturbed by that of another. The one and only anxiety with which a diversity of religious practice inspires him is allied to the motive that induces a citizen of London to lodge a complaint should his neighbour insist on the retention of insanitary drains. John objects to anyone in his immediate proximity attracting the unfavourable attention of the evil spirits, and thus, so to

say, opening the way for such nefarious gentry into his own back-yard. After all, a very human point of view! Behind his somewhat emphatic protests on sundry historic occasions, the Chinaman is nearly always a courteous gentleman, and a visit to his country remains a memory of recurring interest, human and artistic.

THE END

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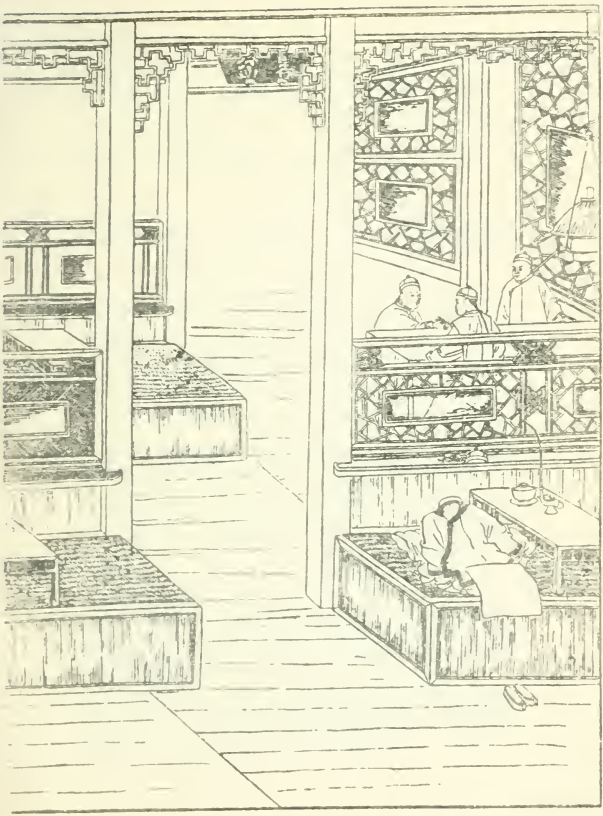

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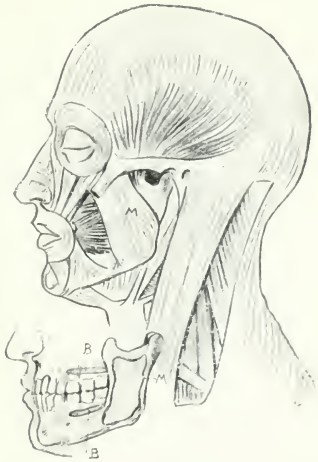

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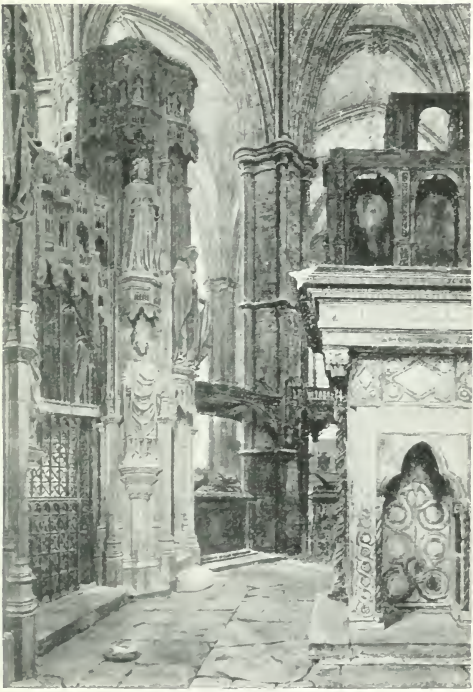

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